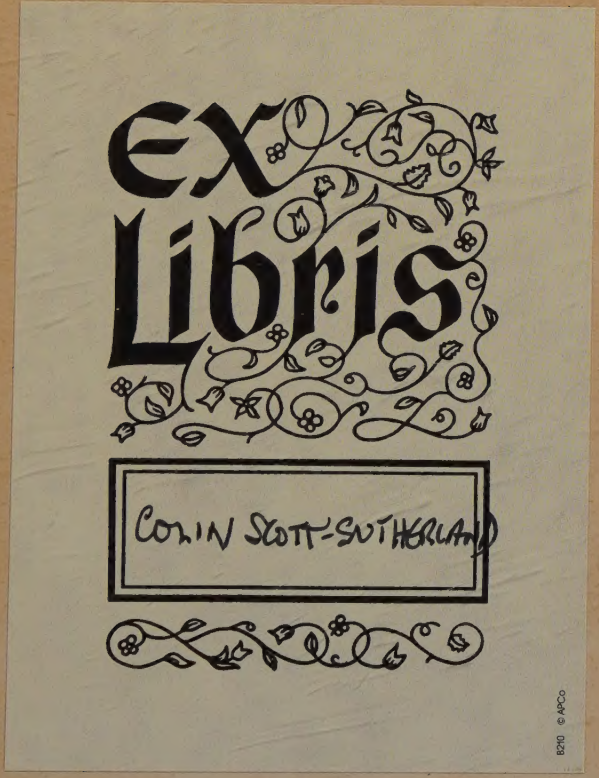
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IMPRESSIONS THAT REMAINED

MEMOIRS

BY

ETHEL SMYTH

D.B.E.; Mus. Doc.

IN TWO VOLUMES—VOL. I

PART I

THE SMYTH FAMILY ROBINSON

(.... TO 1877)

PART II

GERMANY AND TWO WINTERS IN ITALY

(1877 TO 1880)

NEW EDITION

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MADE IN ENGLAND.

IN MEMORY OF M. E. P.

(THE HON. LADY PONSONBY)

AND OF OUR LONG FRIENDSHIP

1890–1916

I find Lady Ponsonby, the wise judge, the firm Liberal, more and more delightful; at last one feels she is getting old—she is eighty-two. She is like a fine flame kindled by sea-logs and sandalwood—good to watch and good to warm the mind at, and the heart too.

EDITH SICHEL (1914)

PREFACE[1]

When it was suggested that a Preface to this new Edition of *Impressions that Remained* and *Streaks of Life* would not be amiss, no proposal could have seemed more bewildering to the author. How does one set about giving a new send-off to an old book?

Then came the reflection that every unknown writer who suddenly puts forth into print will often be asked if this was really a maiden effort? Or, in cases like mine, the question may run: 'What made you think of writing your memoirs'? And probably nine times out of ten such enquiries are only a matter of polite ritual. Yet some of these kind questioners may really wish for an answer; if so, this is obviously the moment to say that up to Christmas 1917 I had never attempted anything more ambitious than articles on the Suffrage, and further that the inception of 'Impressions' was due to a not infrequent combination of ill-luck and happy chance.

I was in Paris, blending war-work with daily visits to a celebrated aurist, and at that time had reason to believe that to listen to music, or think in terms of music, would always be as intolerable to me as it was then. Twice a week I dined alone with a very dear friend, Count Joachim Clary, one of 'les enfants de la maison' at the Empress Eugénie's English home. I had first known Clary as a clever, good-looking, active, rather spoilt youth; now, though still a young man, he was a cripple, scarcely able to move hand or foot, his

[1] This Preface is also included in 'Streaks of Life.'

limbs twisted and gnarled with arthritis, in constant pain day and night, and totally blind. Yet his originality, his culture, his unconquerable sense of humour and, above all, his superb courage, made our friendship one of the assets of my life.

One evening, when I had been recounting some absurd childish adventures, he said: 'It's a queer thing; we know each other so well, yet of your life before we met I know nothing.' And he went on to suggest that these early experiences, so typically English and already so remote, would be well worth writing down, and exactly the sort of thing to read to an invalid after dinner.

I at once set to work and wrote a few chapters, which Clary approved. Whereupon I showed them to another friend of mine, Madame Bulteau, who, under the pseudonym 'Jacques Vontade,' had written a remarkable book called 'L'Âme des Anglais.' We all called her 'Toche,' and I never knew what Christian name this symbol stood for; but to me and many, many others she was what some old Greek has called 'the theatre of my actions.'

Some day no doubt a literary monument will be raised to the memory of this wonderful woman. In touch with some of the most brilliant spirits of France and other countries, surrounded by a faithful band of privileged intimates, she was, I truly believe, one of the most passionately adored people that can ever have existed on this planet—the life, the hope, the support, the inspiration of everyone, male or female, who came into her orbit. I know of two English friends of hers besides myself, who, when the time comes, will have a hand in the upraising of that monument, Edmund Gosse and Maurice Baring, the latter of whom wrote to me last autumn when she died: 'Have you read the O. Henry book, and do you remember what he said about his fits of depression, how there were days on which he "wouldn't

bet on himself." ? What she did was to make you bet on yourself.' Nothing could more perfectly describe the chief action of that noble, generous spirit; and I ask myself what greater service one mortal can render another.

Madame Bulteau's opinion of my early chapters coinciding with Clary's, I submitted them to Maurice, who had come from the front to spend a few terribly busy days in Paris, and his verdict was the same as the others. Soon afterwards I went back to England and was setting to work in real earnest when news came of Clary's wholly unexpected death. Just before I left he had remarked one day that his life might well drag on for years, and I had replied that in the somewhat similar case of my brother Johnny the same thing had been said, yet the end came suddenly and painlessly. (I repeated this conversation to the Empress, whose views on how to talk to sick people are described in *Streaks of Life*, and her caustic comment was: 'Alors c'est comme cela que vous consolez vos amis!') One could only be thankful, of course, that Clary's sufferings were over, yet I often wish he had lived to see the book finished.

Thus it was that 'Impressions that Remained' and its mainly autobiographical successor came to be written; thus was the writer mercifully tided over a dark time when it looked as if constructive work on another field would have to be abandoned for ever.

One more thing I should like to say. In writing what I have hitherto written—and future efforts, if any, will be in the same case—it has been my ardent hope and belief that many readers would say to themselves: 'I am not an artist, nor, so far as I am aware, have I ever attempted to hit any difficult mark; yet this woman's experiences are curiously like my own!'

If the issue of a new edition may be taken as a proof that this was no vain hope, nothing could make me happier as

a musician. For I hold that the permanent quality of an artist's work depends in some mystical manner on the genuineness and multiplicity of his points of contact with life. More than this is needful, of course; the not wholly negligeable matter of talent, for instance; also the gift of self-expression and adequate technical equipment. But the indispensable foundation—in my opinion at least—is a very close touch with reality; a touch, moreover, that has to be constantly tested and readjusted as the years roll on.

Finally, to conclude in the old French manner with a *moralité*, it seems to me that if one can but grow wisdom and determination enough to keep up this difficult process to the very end, aided and abetted by the one sense that grows stronger with advancing years, the sense of humour, then, I venture to think, no one need be afraid of growing old.

1923.

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PART I

THE SMYTH FAMILY ROBINSON

INTRODUCTION

Once, in a roomfull of people, someone suddenly said: 'I wonder what becomes of all the delightful and interesting children one has known?' Startled by this remark we began discussing it, and came to the conclusion that nearly all children are interesting and delightful, just as every coin fresh from the Mint has a certain charm—but unfortunately as time goes on the original design loses its sharpness. Then someone else went on to say that, if faithfully written, the memoirs of any child would be good reading. It was in this spirit that to while away a winter of forced inactivity I began to write mine, having no readers in view at the moment but one or two amiably inquisitive friends.

Early memoirs are necessarily egoistic, for a child's recollections are strung together on the thread of its own little personality. Nor, among such petty joys and sorrows, triumphs and humiliations, can much picking and choosing be done. What you remember was evidently important in your own eyes and there is no other guide to follow. If anyone should deem the result in this case of general interest, it will be because, like the immortal 'Diary of a Nobody,' the daily life described in the first part of these chronicles might be that of any English family in analogous circumstances, and my own confessions the autobiography of any child.

Once girlhood is past, the story perforce becomes less impersonal. But even here, seeing that the record ends when it became the question of a public musical career, maybe that others who have felt the pull of what lies to

right and left of the road you are trying to follow will find in my later adventures something akin to their own. Anyhow it is in that hope and belief that I have recounted them.

One word more. Contemporary correspondence is often the most interesting part of a book such as this, yet to use it freely in the text breaks up the narrative. For this reason I have interpolated six appendix-sections, containing letters from or about persons concerned in the story. And it is certain that the large class of readers who are bored by other people's letters will welcome a method that simplifies wholesale skipping.

CHAPTER I

. . . TO 1867

THE title of this section of my Memoirs is a nickname given by one of my five brothers-in-law to the family he allied himself with. Uncle Charles Scott expressed the same idea in other words when he declared the Irish strain in our blood was predominant; but we were only Irish of the Pale and our branch had been back in England for three generations. Originally of Heath Hall, Yorkshire, where the parent stock still survives, we went to Ireland in 1625, and did so well there as to absorb large parts of Meath, Westmeath, and Queen's County, habitually filling most of the Bishoprics with ourselves and our relations.

At one time I was delighted to believe, as my father who was vague on such matters told us was the case, that our direct ancestor was a certain Edward Smyth, Bishop of Down and Connor, who, in his sub-character of chaplain to William of Orange, drafted the laws concerning Irish Catholics. Later, being seized with a passion for genealogy, and incidentally becoming acquainted with the nature of those laws, I was glad to find that instead of deriving from the person responsible, I should say, for half the religious troubles that have since convulsed Ireland, our progenitor was his younger brother, of whom nothing was to be learned except that his name was John. In straight line from this obscure Smyth, travelling always *via* younger sons, we arrive at my great-grandfather, who having been destined for the army had the sense to emigrate to Liver-

pool and try his hand at banking. Reversing this idea my grandfather, again younger son of a younger son, began life in the Light Cavalry, fought in the Peninsular War, and ended by carrying on the bank in Macclesfield.

The only touch of drama—mild drama—that enlivens the family history is, that during the invasion by Prince Charlie, my great-grandparents pursued what seems to have been the usual course in those days under such circumstances, and retired with the rest of the country families to a spot unlikely to be visited by the soldiery, the Peak of Derby. Meanwhile their home, 'The Fence,' was occupied by Charles Edward and his suite, who left behind them some curious glass hunting goblets, one beautifully engraven with the Prince's portrait, the Order of the Holy Ghost and the *queue* being executed with special care. My father maintained it was very wrong to call a lawful heir 'the Pretender'; none the less he always styled this relic 'the Pretender's glasses' as did his father and grandfather before him.

In the course of my genealogical investigations, the gratifying fact was established that our line of Smyths were admirable God-fearing people, for the most part with pronounced literary tastes; but among them all there is not one single outstanding personality, except perhaps my bachelor great-uncle William Smyth, Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge, whose portrait hangs in the College Hall, Peterhouse. I am told his memory is still held in honour at the University, and his History of the French Revolution still read there.

When but an undergraduate his father's bank failed (as did many banks during the wars with France) and finding himself bereft of everything save an 'elegant scholarship,' which someone brought to the notice of Richard Brinsley Sheridan, he became tutor to young Tom Sheridan.

A memoir of his patron, printed privately in later years, is written with a discretion which, though one admires, one cannot help regretting, for life at Isleworth must have been a fantastic experience. To get a sight of the

master of the house was evidently next door to impossible, so incalculable were his movements, so irregular his hours; and during his prolonged absences from home in vain would the tutor write, suggesting change of air, or change of curriculum for the pupil—in vain demand funds to run the household, incidentally mentioning his own salary, for Sheridan had acquired the dun-haunted man's habit of never opening letters. Nor was it possible to follow him to London and force an interview, for, living in perpetual terror lest some misfortune should befall his idolized and totally neglected boy (who was not even allowed to skate for fear of drowning) the orders were, that under no circumstances whatever was the tutor to leave his charge for a moment. Thus the two unfortunates would find themselves stranded in some sea-side lodging-house long after everyone else had left the place—penniless, living on the precarious credit of the great man's name, yet not daring to go home without permission. In fact this little record of an inmate's experience in that household is just what you would expect; yet the main note is admiration for the fallen genius, who had captured my great-uncle's imagination when an Eton boy, mingled with distress at the ravages of his vices and weaknesses. One gathers there were occasional scenes between the two men, but never once, drunk or sober, did Sheridan fail to treat his subordinate as a gentleman and an equal; in fact nothing stands out more strongly in these hyper-delicate pages than the lovableness of their subject.

'The Professor,' as he was called in the family, also published some 'Lectures on Modern History' (now included in the Bohn Library), and a volume of 'English Lyrics' in mild amatory vein. Everyone in those days wrote verses, otherwise it is inexplicable that an intelligent man should have printed such rubbish—and intelligent he really was. In an autobiographical note, far the most interesting though not the funniest part of the 'English Lyrics,' he remarks that his father could repeat by heart almost any passage you chose to call for in 'classics such as Swift,

Churchill, Dryden, and Shakespere,' and that on one occasion, after reading Thompson's 'Palemon and Lavinia' only once through, he repeated it without a mistake.

My father used to tell an odd little story about his uncle and Jane Austen, who were close friends. It appears that the authoress, wishing to get at his real opinion of one of her novels, put on a friend to pump him, concealing herself meanwhile behind a curtain. The verdict was luckily all that could be desired, till the Professor remarked he was not satisfied as to her orthodoxy, having detected certain Unitarian leanings in her later works; upon which Jane Austen burst forth from her hiding place, indignantly crying: 'That's not true!' One may question whether any degree of intimacy justifies such a stratagem, but no doubt she knew her man; anyhow this curious sidelight on an elusive personality almost condones the 'English Lyrics.'

In another great friend of his, Amelia Opie, wife of the painter—a literary celebrity in the style of her contemporaries Mrs. Radcliffe and Mrs. Barbauld—I always took interest, because, after being for forty years the most inveterate woman of the world, she suddenly joined the Society of Friends and devoted herself to philanthropy mitigated with travel. It appeared that her adoring but home-loving husband persuaded her to try authorship in order to wean her from society; the result was that she at once became famous and went out more than ever.

The Professor was our high-water mark in the way of distinction, and I have sometimes said to myself that, though it must be pleasant to have brilliant ancestors, the possible legacy of an exhausted nervous system is perhaps not worth the glory of a flaming pedigree. In fact it is mainly to the consistent level of decent mediocrity in our own that I attribute the extraordinary health and high spirits of the branch I am concerned with in these pages.

. . . . . .

One day during the lifetime of my brother Johnny, who had a turn for mathematics, and whose memory was accurate, we children started trying to fix the date of our earliest recollections, but it was found impossible to decide exactly when the first event I recalled took place; namely an attempt to jump out of the low pony-carriage as it was crawling up St. Mary Cray's hill, which ended in my falling on my back in the road, having failed to observe that Johnny and the groom always jumped in the direction the carriage was moving in. Thus my conscious life began with the first of a long series of croppers—not a bad beginning.

We lived in those days at Sidcup, then quite a country place, selected by my father as not too far from Woolwich, where, on his return to England after the Indian Mutiny, he took up the command of the Artillery Depot. The Indian forces to which he belonged were then in course of fusion with the regular army, and being very popular, and having served with distinction, he was considered the right man for a task requiring both tact and common sense. I can see him now, starting for the daily ride to his office mounted on his 18-hand charger Paddy, who later filled the parts of hunter, brougham horse, and coal-cart horse with good humour and propriety. I have even ridden him myself, and an old friend once told us his first sight of me was wrong end upwards, suspended by the foot on Paddy's off side with my long hair sweeping the grass, the saddle having slipped round in Bramshill Park. As a tiny child I firmly believed the horse-radish served with the Sunday joint was plucked from the white saddle-marks on Paddy's high withers, and for this reason had an aversion to horse-radish sauce years after I knew the truth about it.

At the time of that leap from the pony carriage the Sidcup household consisted of my paternal grandparents, who came to live with us after the Mutiny, my parents and five children—four girls and a boy. As time went on two more girls arrived on the scene, Bob my youngest

brother being born the year after we left Sidcup; in fact we eventually blossomed into one of the large families that in those days were rather the rule than the exception.

Looking at the portrait of what our friend George Henschel called my grandfather's 'dear old port-wine face,' one remembers the legend that his last action before he died was to stroke his stomach and remark with a chuckle: 'To think of the hogsheads of port I have consoomed in my time!' He might well say so, for he lived to be ninety-six—a splendid, intensely alive old man whom I should have worshipped in later years, whereas then, alas! I only felt a child's repulsion to extreme old age. He always wore a black velvet skull-cap which was associated in my mind with wizards, and I disliked having to kiss his scrubby apple-red old cheek, wondering uneasily why there was always white powder on the lapels of his coat. Again I detested a favourite joke of his, which was to say very slowly, when a certain dreaded hour struck: 'Shadrach . . . Meschach . . . and . . . To BED WE GO!' —the last words with a sudden roar. But what chiefly roused my disapproval was his comment when Johnny, who had put something very hot into his mouth, instantly spat it out; 'Well done, my boy,' cried grandpapa, 'a fool would have swallowed it!' Being imbued with nursery notions of pretty behaviour I was shocked at the coarseness of the males of the family.

The other day, examining old papers of his, I came across some cuttings from the *Manchester Courier* which throw, I think, a picturesque light on the past. After leaving the army he had been given command of the Macclesfield Squadron of the Cheshire Yeomanry, a force much in request during the frequent riots, and with two of these incidents the extracts are concerned. Here is the first.

'Our squadron of yeomanry reached home on Thursday. and formed in the Market Place where they were addressed by Captain Smyth; we give the speech as nearly as we could collect it.

" Gentlemen—It is with the most heartfelt satisfaction that I address you on your return from performing as good and loyal subjects your duty to your King and country. Gentlemen, I am desired by my brother officers to convey to you their best thanks for the alacrity with which you mustered, and for your soldier-like conduct on this, as on all former occasions, when your country's weal has required your protection. With their thanks I beg you will accept my own. But, gentlemen, I am instructed to convey thanks to you from a much higher authority, from that distinguished officer, Major Gen. Sir James Lyon, with whom I have had the honour of an interview, and who has personally expressed to me the high estimation in which he holds your valuable services. The General deeply regrets the necessity for calling you out at this inclement season of the year; but the readiness with which you obeyed the call tends only to prove, that neither the scorching sun of autumn, nor the chilling blasts of winter, can abate the ardour that glows in your manly bosoms. The General further informed me that the call for your services was not only necessary, but most urgent, for that intelligence of a most alarming nature had been received on oath from various quarters, and from sources the most respectable, all agreeing that a simultaneous rising was intended to take place on Sunday last from Glasgow to Stockport, and in Nottingham. Proud am I to say, that our town was not in the list of those enumerated. No, gentlemen, our town is a loyal town, and I trust it will never lose its fair fame by the base conduct of the few radical wretches whose dwelling is amongst us. Gentlemen, when I last had the pleasure of addressing you, I told you those radical reformers never durst, nor ever would, stand the charge of yeomanry, and I still feel persuaded they never will. Of their diabolical intentions there can be no doubt, and they would ere this have been carried into execution, had their proceedings not been closely watched. Gentlemen, I again thank you for your attention, and you can now return to your homes with the universal satisfaction

of having done your duty, and I hope you will be allowed to enjoy the festivities of the approaching season with peace and comfort. And ere you depart, I trust our worthy chaplain who is on my left will give you his blessing." '

The next extract shows that my grandfather had underrated the power of the 'radical wretches' to stir up strife.

'Prior to the dismissal of the squadron of horse they were addressed in an animated speech by one of their officers, Capt. Smyth, a gentleman who has seen much service in the field, and had a command at the storming of Seringapatam. His observations, as nearly as we could collect, were these—"Your conduct has, during the four days and nights elapsed in this service, been so steady and determined, and your discipline so exemplary, that henceforth I shall have the same confidence in you as I have ever had in the regular forces of the crown. To your firm and cool intrepidity it is owing that we return from the achievement of an arduous service with our pistols yet undischarged, and our swords unstained with our countrymen's blood. How far this moderation has been met with a corresponding temper by the deluded foes of England's peace, your own dwellings, cowardly assailed in our absence, are here before your eyes to testify. Happy for Macclesfield that we were far hence while the wretched enterprise was in progress! Had we returned in the night of yesterday, according to our orders first received, justice had demanded a sacrifice the possibility of which I shudder to contemplate.

"Farewell, my friends, and distant, far distant, be the day which shall arm us against the hearts of our fellow townsmen." '

I cannot quite understand why the counter-orders which enabled the foes of England to escape retribution should be a subject for rejoicing; perhaps this sentiment was merely a rhetorical flourish.

. . . . . .

My grandmother left no impression on my mind; and as my father and mother will be described later, I will pass on to my own generation, beginning with the eldest, Alice, supposed never to have been naughty in her life, and whose goodness one governess said was 'positively monotonous.' Of this specially beloved sister I chiefly remember that she said her Catechism in what we used to call a squeaky voice—that is a voice to which she has been prone all her life when reading family prayers. I also remember that she once said to me: 'You have a very strong will; *why not will to be good?*' and that this tribute to my strength of character secretly delighted me. Whether the advice was followed I cannot say, but to harness the pride of a child to the cart is a good receipt.

Johnny, the next of the family, was at that time my model, my tastes being essentially boyish—a trait he met with mingled disapproval and patronage. I soon noticed that I climbed higher and was generally more daring than he, and no doubt dwelt on the fact, which would partly account for a certain lack of sympathy between us. Being himself of a quiet orderly disposition, perhaps too he disliked the violent ways that made my mother call me 'the stormy petrel'; anyhow I always thought he judged me severely.

After Johnny came Mary; two years later I arrived—the first of the bunch to be born in England, all the rest being little Indians. When the Mutiny broke out our parents were at home on leave, having brought with them Alice and Johnny, who were getting too old for the climate. As often happened in those days the baby, Mary, had been left behind in charge of a cousin, the idea being to return to her in a few months; and while my father was hurrying back alone to India, Mary went through all sorts of vicissitudes, was carried off to a place of safety by her ayah, hidden behind a haystack, and so on, till arrangements could be made for sending her home.

My father left England on June 30, and I was born on the 23rd day of the following April—a ten months' child.

In pre-suffragette days I was proud of this fact, having heard that such children are generally boys and always remarkable! Since then I have ascertained that no one but the most benighted old Gamps ever held such a theory, and wonder if the latter part of it was an invention for soothing paternal doubts and suspicions.

Mary and I shared a bed, an uncomfortable arrangement for her, as I was afraid of the dark and apt to awake in the night demanding comfort. She eventually insisted on a bolster, which our nurses called ' the old man,' being put between us under the bottom sheet, but promised to hold my hand on Monday nights till I fell asleep, and I spent the whole week looking forward to Monday. I was also terrified of churchyards, and as the church was close by, used to slip out after dark and force myself to walk a given distance, say twenty steps, along the path between the tombstones, rushing home in agony after the ordeal was over.

There were four years between me and the next child Nina, a gap accounted for, as I used innocently to explain to enquirers, by my father's absence in India. I well remember the change when I ceased being the spoiled baby; details escape me but not the ache and fury of it. The births of the other two Sidcup children, Violet and Nelly, evidently took place, but I remember nothing about these events; indeed my early recollections, when not concerning myself only, are chiefly connected with Johnny and Mary.

When my grandfather died (1864) grandmamma went to live with one of my aunts, and my parents moved into the best bedroom.

CHAPTER II

. . . TO 1867

Of my own generation, all of whom except Johnny are alive at the present day,[1] I shall speak as seen through my childish eyes; of my parents, who are both dead, I shall try presently to give the impression their personalities left with me in later years. But first let me describe our home.

Sidcup Place, in the parish of Footscray, Kent, was originally a small, square, Queen Anne house, separated from the main road by a high wall covered with ivy, between the two a strip of garden. A wing had been added later, along the first story of which, facing the real garden which was at the back, ran what seemed to me then an endless gallery, the most ideal of places for children to rush up and down and yell in. Connected in my mind with this gallery is one of those mysterious incidents that are never really cleared up, and which I for one believed was a case of crime too heinous to be explained to good children. A cousin of ours, Alfred S., had apparently shut the cat up in a small cupboard which stood in a certain place at the end of the gallery—a place in which an imprisoned cat should have had every chance of advertising her presence. But she made no sound; perhaps she was a delicate-minded cat. Whether she actually died of starvation, or was discovered in the nick of time, I forget, but from that moment Alfred became a sinister figure in our collection of cousins, and when he died a few years later I always believed the cat had something to do with it.

There were roomy stables and a big old-fashioned granary

[1] My sister Violet Hippisley died in the autumn of 1923.

mounted on stone pillars, yet none the less infested, so they told us, by rats—a useful legend. The grounds were charming; on one side of the croquet lawn was the most enormous acacia I have ever seen, the bloom of which never failed, and on the other a fine cedar. Beyond was a walled kitchen garden with flowery borders and rose patches, and the object of our lives was to mount the walls, unobserved, from the far side in quest of forbidden fruit. Once I remember the gardener, who had stealthily removed the ladder, suddenly appearing with a long switch; we flew along the top, he at the bottom of the wall, calling out as we reached the spot where the ladder should have been: 'Now I've got yer, yer little warmints,' and I am glad to say I followed Johnny's lead and took a flying leap down into safety, a drop of eight or nine feet—not a mean performance for a child of less than that number of years.

Beyond the kitchen garden was a shrubbery that seemed to me then what the woods in Rossetti's sonnets seem to me now,—a vast mysterious place full of glades and birds, wildflowers and bracken; beyond that again, not on our property I think, was a nut-wood intersected by green paths one exactly like the other, in which I never strayed far from my elders for fear of getting lost. I was always haunted with this particular terror, and once, when separated for one second from my family in the midst of a seething fire-work crush at the Crystal Palace, started such appalling yells of 'I shall never see my dear Papa and Mama again!' that the crowd instantly divided to enable my father's hand once more to grasp mine.

Fringed with disreputable-looking willows was a duck pond, on which we used to put forth in wine boxes and tubs; and hard by an old elm-tree, in which Alice, Johnny, and a friend of his built one of the many descendants of the Tree House in the 'Swiss Family Robinson.' It had a floor, and heaps of shelves and hooks, and we were allowed to have tea up there when we had been very good. As milk warm from the cow figured among our treats I pre-

tended to love it, but really was rather nauseated, and privately thought milking an improper sight. It seemed cruel, too, to maul the poor cows like that, and when the gruff cowman said they liked it, he was not believed.

I have two special farmyard recollections, one being the occasion on which young Maunsell B— a school friend of Johnny's who spent most of his holidays with us and considered himself engaged to Mary—promised me sixpence if I would ride a slim black pig called Fairylight round the yard. For some reason or other we were dressed in clean, open-work, starched frocks, and when, after being shot off on to the manure heap, I was dragged into my father's study by our infuriated nurse, it was easy to see he could hardly keep his countenance. The other incident was my bribing the cowman (again with sixpence) to let me see a pig killed—conduct which deeply shocked and horrified Johnny who considered such sights a male privilege. The terrific scolding that followed was unnecessary, since for months afterwards I turned green whenever I heard a pig squealing. At last even the nurse pitied me and would say: 'Bless your heart he's only squealing for his dinner,' which I hope was true. Otherwise I am quite sure I was not a cruel little girl, except perhaps later on in the donkey days, when dreadful things were done with the butt end of a whip; but anyone who has had to do with donkeys will make allowances.

Among other memories such as these, to which one can put no exact date, certain only that they root in the earliest days of one's childhood, is the great occasion when the house caught fire. A modest blaze, caused by the light-hearted way builders used to work beams into kitchen chimneys, it was soon got under; but I remember the increasing smell of charred wood, and the wild excitement when the floor of our big cupboard was found to be smouldering, the nursery being above the kitchen. For days carpenters were in the house putting down new boards, and when the nurse's foot went through the ceiling below, the cook, whose imagination no doubt was running on

workmen's tools, declared she had taken it for ' a great big 'ammer.' Whereupon everyone in the house began staring at nurse's feet, and there were allusions to ' the blacks,' whose legs are notoriously planted half way between heel and toe.

Another vivid recollection is Danson Park, inhabited by a cross, gruff-voiced old uncle, husband of Papa's eldest sister, who did not like children. As usual in those days there were a bakehouse and dairies, and we were allowed to skim a cup-full of cream from any bowl we liked. But the bakehouse was the great attraction, for there we used to knead little dough mice, with currants for eyes, poking them ourselves into the oven to take home by and by. I remember that as a rule they were either stodgy and grey, or very white and requiring to be broken up with chisel and hammer. There seemed to be no medium. But among the many pleasanter greedy memories I have stored up in my life, and hope yet to store, is the exquisite flavour of some muddy perch which were caught by us one afternoon in a stream that ran through beautiful Footscray Place, and cooked for supper as a very special treat.

Another incident stands out among all the rest, uncanny, inexplicable, appealing to the agitated imaginativeness nearly all children possess, though what becomes of it later on one cannot think;—an emotion no one handles more supremely than German writers such as Hoffmann and his contemporaries. Again the scene is at Footscray Place, in front of a great jar full of what I now fancy must have been ears of bearded Egyptian wheat, and which we were told came out of a mummy's coffin. But according to my conviction they were thousand-year-old insects, not really dead but in a state of suspended animation; for when placed in a soup-plate with a little water at the bottom they presently began to swell, stretch out their legs, and turn slow somersaults. No one knows what nightmares followed that particular treat.

Finally there is one more memory, dateless, but imperishable, because I was never allowed to hear the end of it—an occasion on which all unconsciously a life's philosophy

was formulated. Once grandmama helped me to some pudding, and seeing I did not touch it exclaimed: 'Why, I thought that was your favourite pudding!' My answer was: 'Yes, but this is so little I can't eat it.'

I think on the whole we were a naughty and very quarrelsome crew. My father once wrote and pinned on the wall: 'If you have nothing pleasant to say *hold your tongue*'; an adage which, though excellent as receipt for getting on in society, was unpopular in a nursery such as ours, for words lead to blows and we happened to love fighting. There was one terrific battle between Mary and myself in the course of which I threw a knife that wounded her chin, to which she responded with a fork that hung for a moment just below my eye, Johnny having in the meantime crawled under the table.

Then again there was a loft in which queer old swords and pistols looted by my father in his Indian campaigns were stored away, together with hideous discarded family portraits, to stab which was of course irresistible. But the strange thing is that we often fought with these weapons among ourselves, not infrequently in anger, and yet did each other no serious damage. It was in the loft that our first smoking essays took place. Some people say this is an acquired taste; if so someone acquired mine for me before I was born, for we often smoked bits of my father's broken canes, as well as tea rolled inside brown paper, and I can truthfully say the thing came as naturally to me as eating pear-drops, nor was I ever the worse for it.

Of course we merited and came in for a good deal of punishment, including having our ears boxed, which in those days was not considered dangerous, and my mother's dramatic instinct came out strongly in her technique as ear-boxer. With lips tightly shut she would whip out her hand, hold it close to one's nose, palm upwards, for quite a long time, as much as to say: 'Look at this! You'll feel it presently'—and then . . . smack!

I think I am the only one of the six Miss Smyths who

has ever been really thrashed; the crime was stealing some barley sugar, and though caught in the very act, persistently denying the theft. Thereupon my father beat me with one of grandmama's wooden knitting needles, a thing about 2½ feet long with a knob at one end. He was the least cruel of men, and opponents of corporal punishment will say its brutalising effect is proved by the fact that when I howled he merely said: 'The more noise you make the harder I'll hit you.' Hit hard he did, for a fortnight later, when I joined Alice, who had been away all this time at an aunt's, she noticed strange marks on my person while bathing me, and was informed by me that it came from sitting on my crinoline.

Even in after-years my mother could not bear to think about that thrashing. All I can say is it left no wound in my memory as did snubs, and was the only punishment that ever had any effect—for I dreaded being hurt. Indeed, to run the risk of ordinary pains and penalties, and make the best of it when overtaken by them, was quite part of our scheme, and I am glad to know that some of our happy thoughts when under punishment extorted unwilling admiration even from our chastisers.

For instance one day, when Mary and I knew that incarceration in an empty room at the top of the house would surely be our lot, we seized as many books as we could lay hold of, and stuffed them into our drawers, which buttoned up at the sides. I remember the agony of feeling them slip lower and lower as we were herded upstairs, and how finally, just as the key was turned on us, down they came in an avalanche. On another occasion we were locked up in Papa's dressing-room and the shutters were barred; but there was light enough to ransack his wardrobe and construct, with the aid of pillows and bolster, a complete effigy of him lying on his back on the floor in full hunting costume. And as finishing touch, the pincushion, with an inscription pricked out in pins, 'For dear Papa,' was laid on the effigy's breast. If that didn't melt them I really don't know what would, but as a matter of fact an in-

discreet word let drop now and again by visitors made us suspect that a more lenient view of our crimes obtained than might have been supposed. Anyhow, I know we were considered very quaint and amusing children, and, as happens in most families, were alternately encouraged by guests to chatter, and snubbed by our parents for being forward.

The two great indoor occupations were boat-building and a game called ' grandeurs '—really dressing up and acting. It took its name from a sack thus labelled, in which were stowed away remnants of my mother's old ball dresses, feathers, the huge bunches of artificial grapes then in fashion, and gold braid from my father's uniforms—our theatrical wardrobe of course. The word ' grandeurs ' had probably been used in fun by mother, who was brought up in France, but we pronounced it in broad English ' granndjers.' To this day the succession of small cardboard boxes in which are packed the modest store of ornaments I take about with me is inscribed ' grandeurs,' and the smart housemaids in country houses who lay out the contents on my dressing-table may well be astonished at this designation.

Like all children we of course ' acted ' our parents' friends, and one of Johnny's and my most admired productions was a visit from our neighbours the Sydneys. Lord Sydney, then Lord Chamberlain, was the most pompous old gentleman I have ever seen, exactly like ' the Earl ' in melodrama, with his curled grey whiskers and gold *pince-nez*. He had a way of holding out two fingers to Johnny and saying ' how do boy ' which was done justice to by his personator. Lady Sydney was rather a dear, I used to think, and by crinkling up my nose, looking down it, and complaining of the east wind, I was considered not only to resemble her as much as a child of seven can resemble a woman of forty-five or fifty, but to give a satisfactory rendering of what we were told was ' the Paget manner.' I particularly remember the Sydneys, of course, because they were our local grandees—also because their

extreme friendliness to my parents caused some heart-burning to other less favoured neighbours.

When engaged in boat-building, a type of conversation prevailed—result of absorption in our job combined with habitual garrulousness—which we ourselves recognised as idiotic and called 'ship conversations.' This was the sort of thing: 'I say!'—'What?' (*Pause.*) 'I say!'—'Well?' 'D'you know what I'm going to do? I'm going to make a rudder.' (*Long Pause.*) 'What for?'—'D'you mean to say you don't know what a rudder's for?'—'Of course I know what a rudder's for.' (*Pause.*) 'Wha-a-at?'—'Of course I know what it's for.' (*Long pause.*) 'Then why did you ask?'—'Ask what?'—'Why I was going to make one.'—'I didn't ask why you were.'—'O what a cracker! Mary, didn't she ask why I was making a rudder?'—and so on by the hour. Needless to say our ships were raced on the pond and always turned turtle.

The final scene in each day's drama was going down to dessert in starched, richly beribboned frocks, our hair well crimped, and sometimes as a great treat a teaspoonful of sherry would be added to our tumbler of water. In later years Nina was once heard confiding to her nurse that the one wine she could not bear was sherry and water.

It will surprise no one to learn that I didn't care much for dolls, but strange to say Mary was in the same case. Of course we had dolls, but they spent most of their time in strict quarantine, it being our habit to inflict on them long illnesses supposed to be infectious and yet to require no nursing. The fact that they bored us was too revolutionary to be faced, so we had to find some plausible reason for ridding ourselves of their hated company. The only difficulty was to invent enough new diseases. Up to the time I am thinking of the family had been immune from measles, but not so the dolls, and when, at our wit's end, we decided to give them a second bout, Johnny objected that no one ever had measles twice—and his word carried weight. Shortly afterwards the whole household was down with it, including my mother who became exceedingly

ill, but I remember the incident mainly because of my joy that for once the great Johnny had been wrong, my mother having had measles when a child.

As I am on the theme of epidemics, which of us can ever forget the whooping-cough visitation? how we wandered about whooping for weeks and weeks, armed with dreadful little jampots that were hidden under sofas when visitors came, and inadvertently kicked over. After that, the one thing Mary drew the line at was the dolls having whooping-cough.

She was far the more ladylike child of the two. Besides a strong regard for appearances she had presence of mind of the sort the French call *aplomb*, and would come with flying colours out of situations that, to use an admirable slang expression, floored me; in fact the reproach so often levelled in the nursery of making a spectacle of oneself could seldom be addressed to her with justice. But one day circumstances were too strong for her. Travelling backwards in a shut carriage always made us both feel sick, and once at a review at Woolwich, when we were perched on the top of the brougham to get a good view, poor Mary was overcome before the whole of Her Majesty's forces. It was some time before I let her hear the last of that.

Those were of course the days of croquet, but I cannot remember our playing that game at children's parties. I hated outdoor parties, because one was dressed up at an unseasonable hour and had to behave like a little lady; also, as happened later in the long struggle for the vote, the males, who were unable to do without us in private life, cold-shouldered us in public, and it may be imagined how a tomboy would resent this.

To go to the seaside in the summer was part of our ritual. London was even then a big place, and then, as now, poured its drains into the Thames; nevertheless Southend, a place no modern hygienic mama would dream of sending children to, was generally our bourne. There and at Broadstairs my life-long passion for the sea awoke;

the sea, that is, as viewed from the land. As for the drains, my father had sturdy, old-world views on such subjects, and often said there was nothing harmful about ' a good open stink.'

It is curious to think how much less fuss was made in those days about children's ailments and accidents. For instance one day, when our parents, who were away on a visit, were expected home, I made some toffee, but forgot the first rule of all, to butter the plate, consequently the mess stuck to it. I leant my whole weight on the knife, holding the plate firmly, the toffee came away, and I cut my left thumb literally to the bone. It ought to have been a case of lockjaw. I held it in a jug of water and bandaged it with rags, and when the parents arrived all my mother said was: ' That comes of wanting two treats in one day ' (the first treat being their return home). The result of these Spartan methods is, that all my life I have only just been able to span an octave with my left hand.

At this stage of my existence I stood in great awe of my father, but adored my mother, and remember her dazzling apparitions at our bedside when she would come to kiss us good night before starting for an evening party. I often lay sleepless and weeping at the thought of her one day growing old and less beautiful. Besides this, wild passions for girls and women a great deal older than myself made up a large part of my emotional life, and it was my habit to increase the anguish of love by fancying its object was a prey to some terrible disease that would shortly snatch her from me. Whether this was simply morbidity, or a precocious intuition of a truth insisted on by poets all down literature—from Jonathan and David to Tristan and Isolde—that Love and Death are twins, I do not know, but anyhow I was not to be put off by glaring evidence of robust health. I loved for instance Ellinor B., a stout young lady who rode to hounds, was a great toxophilite as they were called in those days, led the singing in Church in a stentorian voice, and was

altogether as bouncing a specimen of healthy young womanhood as could be met with. Persuaded nevertheless that this strong-growing flower was doomed to fade shortly, I one day asked Maunsell if he did not think she was dying of consumption, and shall never forget my distress when he answered with a loud guffaw: 'Consumption? Yes, I should think she *may* die of consumption, but not the kind you mean!'

At Sidcup too I learned that the accents of tragic passion have as poor a chance of being understood in the nursery as elsewhere. I worshipped my lovely cousin Louie, and one day when she took me on her lap and cuddled me, I murmured, burying my face in her ample bosom: 'I wish I could die!'—whereupon the nurse exclaimed: 'Why, Miss Ethel, whatever makes you say such a thing? *I thought you were so fond of your cousin!*' People's love affairs, in as far as I could get to hear about them, always arrested my attention, and at a time when I was too young to know either the artist's passion or personal ambition, love seemed to me the only thing that mattered; but nothing less than Keats's unquenchable flame of course. One day a letter from an admirer of Louie's was indiscreetly read out in my presence (she was then a young widow) and I was much puzzled by the phrase: 'O for one hour of your love!' Of what use, I said to myself, could one hour be to anyone? but for once asked no questions.

Most of my early recollections are connected with turbulent love agonies (my own, I mean) or equally tragic humiliations, such as when one's drawers came off at children's parties—a trouble little girls are born to as the sparks fly upward; or again when I handed a penny to the Post Office clerk, halfpenny postage being unknown in those days, and guessed from his manner of re-echoing my demand for 'a pennyworth of stamps' that I had said something ridiculous. From one of these trials—agonies of love—years, alas! set us free; but the other—an occasional sense of having made a fool of oneself—will be with some of us to the end!

To conclude, I may mention the fact that on Sundays

all the Mudie books were swept into a cupboard and replaced by various well-bound serious works, one of which, 'James on the Collects,' was known to us as 'James on the Colic.' Sometimes we would surreptitiously overhaul the immured library books, and were driven to the conclusion that one or two novels must surely be upstairs in my mother's bedroom.

It is no doubt in connection with this and other Sunday practices that Nelly and Bob, in all innocence, adopted a curious version of one of their Sunday hymns which seems to have escaped the notice of their elders. The fourth word of the first line of this absurd doggerel is *Sabbath*, but the children's reading was:

'This is Sunday, *Suffer*-day.'

CHAPTER III

. . . TO 1867

RELATIONS played a great part in our lives. Some are remembered because of one single incident connected with them; for instance there was a brother of my father's whom we disliked, chiefly, I really believe, because waking up one night and suddenly feeling the ivory bell-handle bob on his bald head, he was so terrified that he began bellowing like a bull (or as Violet once said when a child, like a bull in a basin) and roused the whole household. Or again there was an aunt of my mother's, a shrewd old maid with a twinkling eye—one of the few relations who liked me—whom I remember because of two remarks she made to Johnny. Once when he was fidgeting she exclaimed: 'I really believe you must be growing a tail!' which I found intensely funny though rather risky; and on another occasion, when he was being a little censorious, she suddenly said: 'Do you know, Johnny, a man once made a huge fortune by minding his own business.' It took me some time to understand the point of this remark, but once grasped, I said to myself: 'There's one for Master Johnny!'

But a relation who really shared our life was a clergyman cousin, Hugo J. He lived in the next parish, always ate his Sunday dinner with us, adored our parents, and I really think spent all his spare time—and he was a busy zealous priest—amusing us children. His draughtsmanship was quite above the average, and besides a celebrated donkey-cart picture of which I shall speak later, we still possess a water-colour sketch by him of the Bengal Horse Artillery charging a native regiment. A young officer in spectacles, evidently my father, leads the charge, and is slashing off a Sepoy's head in his stride. We used to ask

Papa with awe if this really happened, but he only chuckled behind his *Times*, and we never got a definite reply.

Kind as he was to us, in those days I did not love Hugo and I don't think he liked me. His was the type of mind that delights in scoring off people, and humbling the pride of conceited little girls; also he had a habit I have always resented of saying rather unpleasant things in a laughing way. All the same, what with his inexhaustible talent for inventing agitating games, drawing 'bogies,' and immortalising our adventures in pen-and-ink sketches, he certainly contributed immensely to our happiness, and the rest of the family was devoted to him.

He it was who started in us the craze of illustrating our correspondence, which brings me to yet another cousin, to whom, when he went to India, Mary and I wrote adoring letters by every mail. Postage to India was 1s. in those days, and my effusions were long and profusely illustrated. After months of correspondence our cousin at last wrote: 'I love your letters more and more, and don't a bit mind their having only a penny stamp on them.' I rather think each letter must have cost him about 5s. and he was far from well off.

Other relations were a niece of my father's whose husband was quartered at Woolwich, and though he was a delightful person with children, I chiefly remember our being once sent over alone in the brougham to lunch with them, on which occasion the doors were firmly tied up with rope and the window-sashes plugged with cork, so that by no possibility could we get out. Sometimes I think we were as little fussed about as children could desire, but recollections such as this seem to point the other way. The truth is probably, that our parents inclined to give us plenty of rope; that we then took too much; that aunts and cousins presently stepped in with criticisms and expostulations, whereupon the rope was for a while drawn very tight, then relaxed again and so on. I have seen this happen in many families; the children know all about it and put black marks against certain names which it takes years and years to obliterate.

An infrequent and eagerly looked-for guest was my father's cousin and contemporary Colonel O'H., an Irishman whose tremendous brogue gave extra point to his tremendous language. A former Duchess of Atholl once remarked: 'It is a pity sweering has gone out of fashion, it was such an offset to conversation,' and certainly our cousin did his best to keep that fashion alive. His wife, who also had a strong but very pretty brogue, was of the gentle type such men generally prefer, his daughter graceful, languid, humorous, and very wide awake in a quiet way. Everything connected with him was seen through the usual Irish spectacles; his avenue was the finest in Ireland, his daughter had a prettier seat on horseback than any girl in Ireland, her mare was the best bred animal in Ireland, and so on. What most astonished us was his jovial freedom with our parents, and when he pressed his favourite beverage, 'whisky dilooted with sherry,' on my father, thundering out: 'What? too strong for a seasoned old cask like you, John? Aren't ye ashamed, ye owld hypocrite!' we thought the skies would fall. But my father merely laughed and took it as a matter of course.

Most of this old gentleman's remarks were deliberately intended to startle and cover his interlocutor with confusion, but his periods were so rounded, and the whole thing put through with such a swing, that it was impossible to take offence. On one occasion he replied to our very genteel governess who had mincingly enquired if he had not found it very cold in Church: 'Ah ye sacrilegious wretch! If your religion doesn't warm ye Satan will '—a very perfectly constructed phrase, shot out as always with the force of a bullet from a gun. In short he impressed me more than all the rest of our relations put together.

My parents were very hospitable, and certain friends were constant guests, including many old Indians whose names I have since met in print, such as Sir Alfred Light, a tremendous buck, middle aged, with stays and dyed waxed moustaches, said to have been a great lady-killer; Sir Harry

Tombs, Sir Herbert and Lady Edwardes, and others. I bitterly regret not having cross-questioned my father more persistently about India and the Mutiny. Nowadays fresh records of that most horrible of all our many wars are constantly appearing, and a queer feeling rises in my heart when I come across certain names and remember I looked on the faces of those who bore them with a child's indifferent eyes.

But one amazing couple of old Indians who, being relations, often came to Sidcup, and whose names figure in no records whatever, were the A's. She was of the great Z clan, with a huge oblong face the colour of brick dust, and, but for her tow wig, was the image of her celebrated but not beautiful brother Lord Z. We were not fond of her, but adopted her name for a frequent childish complaint, '*scruatum internum*,' with enthusiasm. Colonel A., a pale insignificant man, with a sad, drooping, white moustache and folds of yellow parchment skin hanging about his jowl, was the least military looking figure conceivable; and I have since learned that his career had been far from brilliant. Prototype of all hen-pecked husbands, he was ordered to bed, ordered out of the room, ordered to talk or be silent as the case might be, and ordered out riding on a chestnut horse of his, called 'Alma,' that ambled, and was supposed to be the only animal he could sit on without falling off. As he rode he gently flailed the horse's flank with a gold-headed bamboo cane, which being hollow did no harm but produced an immense noise; you heard him coming nearly a mile off. He was put on diet by his wife, and sometimes, she being at the other end of the table, would trifle with the unpalatable messes she insisted on having prepared for him; but presently the tow wig would bend forward across all intervening obstacles, and a gruff, imperative voice uttered the startling words: 'Cow, cow,' which is Hindustani for 'eat.'

This reminds me that when they began discussing matters not fit for our ears, one of our parents, generally Papa, would suddenly say something that sounded like 'barba

loaka sarmnay,' which means 'remember the children,' and continue the conversation in Hindustani, much to our admiration. It seemed strange that Papa, who couldn't speak a word of French or German, should be so glib in this heathen jargon, but as he had spent about thirty years of his life in India it was not surprising. My mother, who was with him there about a third of that time, picked up her Hindustani, as most women did in those days, from the servants, the usual number of which in a small household was thirty or forty; according to my father her command of the language was extensive but ungrammatical.

I think we were fairly well off in the early Sidcup days, especially after the death of my maternal grandmother, whose only surviving child mother was, and who bequeathed to her, among other things, the very fine jewels and lace of which there will be dramatic mention presently.

'Bonnemaman,' as she was known to us in contradistinction to our very English 'Grandmama,' and whose name I sometimes remember with a start was once Mrs. Struth, lived in Paris and was a mysterious personality. I never saw her myself, but there were legends of her having taken to her bed soon after she was forty, partly because of rheumatism, partly from 'foreign' indolence, and chiefly in order to receive innumerable doctors in becoming caps and bed-jackets. We gathered that she was considered worldly and gifted, also that like all Straceys she had great musical talent, and years afterwards it thrilled me to learn she had known Chopin intimately. They said she had been extremely handsome—as we could judge for ourselves when her portrait by Jonquière came into my mother's possession—and one realised vaguely that an unfortunate second marriage had taken place, it being understood that the initials on the mother-of-pearl counters we played round games with must not be alluded to because they were those of Mr. Reece, the second husband. Louie once told us that when a child she had been taken to see her in Paris, and was sent out on to the balcony with a

small French boy, who at once began spitting on the heads of passers-by; when suddenly beautiful 'Aunt Emma' shot out and boxed his ears as Louie never saw ears boxed before or since. Later she remembers an awe-inspiring peep of her ill in bed, all white lace and cherry-coloured ribbons; the room was darkened and one went on tiptoe. I recollected these details, because anything like a mystery rouses a child's interest.

One morning, some time in the sixties, a telegram was handed to my mother under the acacia tree; she fainted, and we learned that Bonnemaman was dead. After that I forgot all about her, till, again during the genealogical craze, I came upon some rather curious correspondence.

If she, as is evident, was imprudent in money matters, Mr. Reece was nothing better than an adventurer, but she adored him and quarrelled with her relations on his account. These must have been odious to a degree, for in one rather piteous letter she says it really was *not* kind of Aunt So and So to put about in England that she had large cupboards built in her bedroom in order to conceal lovers; an inspection of the apartment, she adds, would show that the only cupboard large enough 'for such a wicked purpose' is in the dining-room. There is much discussion about raising money between her and a blunt, kindly man of the name of Guthrie, possibly a trustee and I think a radical, who writes a beautiful hand. One of his letters shows what people who foolishly preferred foreign countries to England had to put up with in those days, and is also so full of character and genuine good feeling that I cannot refrain from giving it.

September 10, 1837.

'Pardon, my dear friend, for the coarse terms in which it appears I addressed you in my last letter; the line of my pursuits, and my habits altogether, require me rather to speak the facts as they rise to my mind, and I believe I study far too little the conveying my thoughts with the courtesy due to the party addressed. I must go abroad

by and by to study the Embroidery of Language and Sentiment, but in the meanwhile I cannot honestly retract a word of what I previously expressed. I disapprove decidedly of your having to borrow from *any* man; the fact itself is sufficient, I think, to prove Indiscretion. As to the Respectability I shall say nothing; you would not have the contest in your own bosom were you not conscious of your own Wrong.

'You speak more to the point, in my view, when you hold cheap your own personal Sacrifices, if by any such you could redeem your independence. Is this a bit-by-bit Tory-like feeling, or can you come it strong like a radical reformer?

'You say that not one of your wealthy kindred can or will help you. Then help yourself. Accept the situation offered to Madame Guithart, put Nina[1] to school with Amy Loo at Miss Coultons. I will with pleasure find the money for her charges. Take Tiny with you to Jersey and your family is provided for. In twelve months you will again be a Person of Fortune, and you will have done nothing you need be otherwise than proud of. Nina would be greatly improved in health and education. For I hold that French Education, however elegant and agreeable it may be, wants the honesty, the principle, the English feeling which gives an English woman a Caste and Superiority over the women of all other countries, and which your family run the risk of losing from their long residence in France in Foreign Society.

'My suggstion has nothing but common sense to recommend it. The idea of such a plan will horrify and humiliate the proud feelings of all your family, but still in Moral Honesty it is unimpeachable, and in all its Consequences would, after 12 months, be beneficial to you and yours. Most particularly to Nina, in whose welfare I feel a very warm interest, and not less in your own, my good Lady, though we may have different ways of proving it. I do not impeach your Code, only I claim a right to think

[1] My Mother.

for myself; it is not worth your while quarrelling with me because we may differ. You can put my letter in the Fire and thus will end this my d—d friendly interference.

'Believe me always yours very truly,

'D. CHARLES GUTHRIE.'

To this letter was added a very unmitigated postscript addressed to the husband, in the course of which the writer says:

'If the unkindness of your own family and her friends should compel you to mount a 3-legged stool, or even to break stones for a season, I should say that if you thereby redeem your Freedom and Independence you will be comparatively a proud and happy man, and every sensible person would applaud your firmness and decision of character.'

Finally he declines an offer of hospitality in terms which suggest that his correspondent had been insane enough to try and borrow money of the writer: 'Otherwise it has always been a pleasure to give or receive kindness of your wife's family as our forefathers mutually delighted to do by each other—and I believe neither owed the other anything on the score.'

I found too an enchanting letter to her from a French friend who seems to have lent Mr. Reece 3000 francs on interest. No doubt this is the affair alluded to by Mr. Guthrie, and one finds a clue to the personal sacrifices poor Bonnemaman was prepared to make in the following extract:

'Quant au sacrifice que vous voulez faire pour satisfaire à cette dette, je ne l'accepte et ne l'accepterai jamais dans la forme que vous me proposez. Non, mon estimable amie, ce n'est pas moi qui vous dépouillerai de ces cachemires et de ces bijoux *que vous aimez bien*, me dites-vous. Je ne me donnerai jamais le honteux relief de vous avoir privé de ce qui vous est agréable; d'autant plus que ce n'est pas moi qui vous aurais réduite à une si fâcheuse situation.'

To make up for this dig at the husband he speaks of happy days spent in their society. . . .

'. . . grâce à votre esprit, vos talents, et ce caractère si aimable et rare que vous savez porter dans toutes les relations d'un commerce si délicieux. Moi je ne les oublie pas, et ils feront encore les délices de mes vieux jours, malgré tous les regrets qu'ils me causeront. Mais, vous le savez, il est des peines, des chagrins, qui ont encore de la douceur, et j'en trouverai une grande, surtout, dans l'assurance que j'ai d'être toujours digne de votre amitié. . . . *Adieu! Adieu!*—vous rappelez-vous? C'était votre manière de prendre congé! . . .'

Then there is another man friend who writes from Calabria and is called Paris—a name of which no doubt, if they ever heard it, the family made capital. This letter presents the husband in quite a new light, as one 'whose sound comprehensive understanding, whose deep and extensive knowledge of men and things, ought to make him eminent in the career of letters he now proposes to take up.' Written in the April before the Guthrie correspondence, I imagine optimistic Bonnemaman saw wealth flowing towards them through literary channels; the cashmere shawls and jewels were not in jeopardy. In this letter a reproach is levelled against her which delights me: 'I am sure you overrate other women, judging by yourself,' and elsewhere she is told that her intimacy with a certain Madame de Lyris, elderly and far from elegant, though, the writer is convinced, generous and noble-minded at bottom, speaks volumes for the goodness of her heart.

'Young and beautiful as you are yourself, you know how to appreciate *parfum* though the vase be old-fashioned and unbeautiful.' Paris seems to have received a poem from his correspondent at a critical moment which, suddenly found among his papers, makes him suddenly *see* her . . . 'a delusion that faded away with grief.' . . .

Given the ridiculous notions that prevailed even in my

youth on the subject of 'French immorality,' one can imagine the construction put by the family on these friendships, yet I feel convinced from internal evidence that there was nothing wrong.

Tied up with these and other letters—mostly disagreeable ones from near relations—and drafts of her replies, which though dignified are rather funny, I found countless conundrums, charades, and Elegant Extracts in French, English, and Italian, copied out in her own handwriting. One of her most stately drafts concerns the disobligingness of her brother-in-law Sir Henry Durrant, who could not find the time to write out a 'quadrille' which had taken her fancy while staying with him in Norfolk; and on the other side of a still more uncompromising draft are some cantering verses with the refrain: 'And I am the Gipsy King.' I do not know whether she or my mother is responsible for this odd inter-marriage of documents. As 'Paris' remarks: 'Nina promises to take after you,' and it is very like both of them.

Bonnemaman seems to have followed her candid friend Guthrie's advice and retired to Jersey for a while, taking both children with her, but after the death of the youngest little girl the family insisted on exporting an English governess, in order that my mother might have 'some chance of being brought up like an English young lady.' Finally the stepfather became so impossible that there was a judicial separation, but much to her relations' disgust Bonnemaman declined to come home and face 'I told you so,' and lived and died in France. She was considered to have lost caste by her second marriage, and as separations were looked upon as disgraceful in those days, no matter where the fault lay, her situation amply accounts for her having been thus shrouded in mystery. Indeed Alice remembers that some time after her death, my mother, ever unconventional, having casually remarked: 'I wonder if my step-father is alive?' Papa looked greatly annoyed at such a subject being mentioned before the child.

Such was the woman who was hushed up before her grandchildren as a sort of family disgrace! After reading these letters, especially hers to my mother, I have come to the conclusion that poor Bonnemaman, gifted, warm-hearted, impulsive, and thoroughly 'injudicious,' would have been my favourite relation.

. . . . . .

Not long after her death came the tragedy of all old Indians, the failure of the Agra Bank, and my father lost most of his savings; thus in early days I knew the chill cast on a cheerful household by financial worries. Either then or earlier he made heavy sacrifices to ensure each daughter that should remain single £40 a year. As five out of the six married I am the only one to profit by the arrangement, and the title under which I claim this pension would dignify a far smaller sum. According to the India Office I am a . . .

Bengal Military Orphan.

CHAPTER IV

My Father

My father, a fine example of what is fortunately a not uncommon type, was one of fourteen children, six of whom were alive when I was young. Tall, upright, strongly built, with the pleasant, open, very English countenance we see exaggerated in the portraits of Mr. Punch, his bearing was equally suggestive of kindliness and authority. Having to wear spectacles slightly interfered, to my mind, with his military appearance, but in his Horse Artillery uniform, with its masses of gold braid and shaggy busby, he was a fine, soldierly looking man—and in all costumes the picture of a gentleman.

To give an idea how the England of those days flung her youth into the world to find their level, he went out to India at the age of fifteen, he and his brother having been presented with commissions in the Bengal Army by their uncle Sir Theophilus Metcalfe, and a year later was responsible for roads, transport, communications, law and order, life and death, in a district as big as Yorkshire. There is an anecdote connected with his later Indian period which exactly characterises him—one for whom duty and obedience were paramount, but who was capable of transcending the letter of the law on occasion. During the Mutiny certain men of his battery who had joined the mutineers were caught and condemned to be hanged in their officer's presence. Their senior, a sergeant, the best native soldier he ever had under him, advanced, saluted, and said: 'Sahib, you often told me I did my duty to your satisfaction; grant me one last favour, let me die by your own hand.' . . . 'And by Jove,' said my father, 'though

our orders were to humiliate the mutineers in every way, I did as he asked and hanged him myself.'

When quite a young man he became what is well called a martyr to gout; not even a busy life and limitless sport, including boar-hunting (which he hated to hear called 'pig-sticking'), could work off the floods of champagne that flowed in India, so to speak, on the top of my grandfather's hogsheads of port. But between the attacks, right up to the end of his life, his vitality and cheerfulness, and what he chiefly laid store by, his usefulness, were unimpaired.

No man was ever more loved and respected. Single-hearted, shrewd, with great knowledge of the world, partly innate, partly acquired, the watchword of his life was duty, which he pronounced 'dooty,' and after leaving the army he threw himself into county work and made his character felt. He often remarked: 'If I had nothing to keep me busy outside the house what a nuisance I should be in it,' and was generally determined to wear out, not rust out. They always said he was first-rate on the Bench, but once he astonished his brother magistrates by sharply reprimanding a young policeman, who was boasting how he had hidden behind a hedge and caught a man riding a bicycle on the foot-path. 'Then you did very wrong,' said my father, 'to go sneaking about laying traps. You're there to prevent people breaking the law, not to hide and tempt them to break it!'

He combined with his idea of service a simple piety he did not speak of but which his whole life was founded on, and he never went to sleep without reading in one of the little books at his bedside. Meanwhile as Commanding Officer he discouraged denominational hair-splitting, and insisted on his men being entered either as Roman Catholic or Church of England—whichever they preferred.

He was a keen politician—Conservative of course—and Chairman of the County Conservative Union, but advanced in his ideas. Long before the days of Tariff Reform he was in favour of a tax on raw material, and even advocated the enfranchisement of women, a theory no one else in our world took seriously. I remember his

pointing out that three-quarters of the land in the parish was owned by women, and that it was monstrous these should be denied the suffrage. True, I think he was convinced that propertied females would vote his own way, but the injustice and unwisdom of their being voteless was what pre-occupied him; no one believed more firmly that fair play is the only thing that pays in the long run.

I remember once when I was a schoolgirl telling him I had asked Mr. Pursey, the cobbler, why all shoemakers are radicals, and had found his reply ' Well you see, Miss, we has time to *think* ' rather interesting. But Papa was not at all impressed and said he had never heard such infernal nonsense in his life. He was very tolerant by nature and disposed to hear both sides of a question; still convictions are convictions, and one day, when he was well over seventy, he remarked confidentially: ' I am getting an old man, but upon my word it is very difficult for me even now to believe a radical can be an honest man.' He always took the chair at political meetings in the neighbourhood and nine out of ten of his speeches used to end with an exordium to his hearers to ' do your duty by your Queen, your country, and your God.' We children, and I daresay our neighbours, used to look forward to this peroration with some amusement, yet it was uttered so simply and earnestly that it always ended by impressing even me afresh. Towards the end of his life modern ideas were beginning to undermine the respect automatically paid to the gentry, but no one protested at his habit, when Chairman, of silencing objections or awkward questions by rattling his stick furiously on the table and declaring the motion carried unanimously. People just laughed and let ' the General's ' high-handed methods pass unchallenged, such was his overflowing geniality.

He was an unqualified admirer of the British Constitution, and though freer than anyone it is possible to conceive from snobbishness, had a delightful old-fashioned respect for Royalty; if in our haste we stuck a postage-stamp upside down he was seriously annoyed; ' It is

disrespectful to your Sovereign,' he would say. For distinguished personalities he had the same quality of reverence. I remember an incident that amused me even then, when my sense of humour was immature. To his thinking Gladstone was the Devil, and hearing that great man was coming to speak at Aldershot he remarked: 'If I see the beast I shan't take any notice of him.' We afterwards discovered he was by chance on the platform when Gladstone stepped out of the train. 'And what did you do?' asked my mother. 'Well,' was the reply, 'as a matter of fact I believe I raised my hat.' All the same he was delighted when I evaded a suggestion from a daughter of Gladstone's, a neighbour, to come over one day and sing to him. Alas! young people are terribly earnest, and I never had another chance of seeing the G.O.M. at close quarters.

Between my father and me there was never strong sympathy; perhaps he recognised from the first a stubborn will that was eventually to triumph over his. I think too the artistic temperament was distasteful to him, though it was that of my mother, to whom he was deeply attached. Once when Bob was a child Papa found him busy painting, and flew into such a rage at a boy's indulging in such a pursuit, that he swept the whole paraphernalia on to the floor, and Bob thought he was going to be cuffed.

Yet the odd thing was that in some ways he himself had artistic instincts; Byron, Scott, Wordsworth, and other poets of his youth he read aloud admirably, and I was always struck with the musical cadence in his voice when he came to certain sonorous phrases in Family Prayers. Again no one had a keener enjoyment of the beauties of nature, but none of this helped him to see in me anything but the rebel I certainly was.

His excellent delivery of stately English prose came in well reading the Lessons in Church, but he was not a reader gifted with presence of mind, and arriving at certain strong unvarnished statements in the Old Testament, usually bowdlerised or omitted, would cough and stumble and get into terrible trouble, much to the delight of the congregation. My mother

often entreated him to look at the chapter quietly at home first, but this his pride forbade. His versions, too, of some of the crack-jaw biblical names were sometimes remarkable, but there was a simplicity about him which carried off anything and everything. I can see him now, walking slowly up the aisle to the reading desk, sublimely ignorant of the fact that his frock coat was buttoned awry.

On another occasion, when, because of the heat, the Church door stood open, the congregation breathlessly watched a new fox terrior of ours come up the aisle, its mind full of misgivings, and eventually with shyly wagging tail begin snuffing his ankles. He went on reading, gave a kick to the right, went on again, gave a kick to the left, and then said in furious and audible undertones: 'Take the brute out, somebody.' Which somebody did; but his anger at this incident lasted all day; it is the only time I remember him doing anything approaching sulking.

As years went on he got more and more gouty, sticking manfully to tasks other men would have abandoned long ago; but when the time came for giving in, he did so with perfect sweetness of temper. I used to think my mother rather cruel to him about his growing infirmities, but they understood each other very well and he did not resent it. There was an institution that on her birthday he should drive her out himself; but when it came to his being obliged to wind the reins round his weak, gouty wrists, she could not refrain from urging he should let the coachman take them. By this time his hands were so covered with big chalkstones, that our old friend Sir Evelyn Wood said to shake hands with him was like exchanging greetings with a mailed knight, but to the end he persisted in carving chickens and ducks, however tough. My mother would protest her helping was more like dog's meat than anything else, to which he would reply: 'Well: cut off what you don't want and send it back,' but give up carving he would not.

His great expression for actions or theories he approved was 'right and proper.' For instance I remember one Ash Wednesday when my mother, who felt lazy, said she

didn't think she'd go to Church because it was so cold; driven from this position by his statistics concerning the thermometer, she added thoughtfully . . . 'and then I don't like the Commination Service.' 'You mayn't *like* it,' he retorted, 'but it's *right and proper*, and you ought to hear it.' He adored it himself, waggling his head more and more approvingly as curse after curse was reeled off.

He certainly was choleric in the old-fashioned military 'damn-your-eyes' style, and if a footman dropped anything would call out angrily, even at our grandest dinner-parties: 'God gave you two hands, you fool, and why the devil don't you use them?'—a strange reproof, for surely dishes cannot be handed round on that principle, but I liked the phrase and hope the footman did. One proceeding of his greatly delighted our tennis guests; if they stayed too long he would hide behind a big laurel bush near the court and ring the dinner bell violently by way of a hint; some would linger on purpose to provoke this demonstration.

When his own family fell under his displeasure, betrayed by the verbal unreadiness I referred to, and which excitement and anger greatly increased, he would mix up his parts of speech in the most fantastic manner. Once when Bob, then a child of five or six, was teasing the dog Kitty, Papa exclaimed in violent irritation: 'Now Kitty, if you make Bobby bark I'll brain the poker.'' Or again when a chance cab, after leaving someone at our house, agreed to take someone else to the station if not kept waiting, he bellowed up the stairs: 'Come along; no last words: the cab may fly any moment.' In my youth the wine was always locked up by the family after meals, and one of his best '*coq-à-l'âne*,' as my mother, whose delight they were, called them, was: 'Now then Bob, lick up the locker . . . well, I mean lick up the shutter.' But it was in the tightly packed Sunday landau, a situation calculated to rasp nerves all round, that this mood would most often overtake him. I remember his saying to Nelly and Bob, who were grumbling at being squeezed to death: 'Well if you two infernally thin people can't sit five in a carriage I don't know who can,' and

as we drew up at the Church door he added: 'Now Mama, you come first, so just get out of the window.'

Some of the things he said in his public capacity used to leak out; how he advised the Bench to kill two stones with one bird, and informed a Committee that the pollution of the Blackwater, a filthy little local river, was mainly caused by the 'vast quantity of vegetable marrows flowing down from the hills.' But in private life he never beat his advice to the mama of a rheumatic daughter: 'You ought to put her under a masher.' Once started on the wrong path, his conversation would be on these lines for the rest of the day, and my mother would laugh till she cried.

In spite of his insinuating on occasion, as most elderly men do, that he had been anything but a milksop in his youth, I cannot think he was ever wild, but he certainly had a weakness for what he called 'a bit of a scamp,' and always maintained his best subalterns were in that category. We noticed, too, that he was more than indulgent to members of the other sex suspected of frailty; so much so that Mary, a particularly favourite married daughter, once said in fun: 'I wonder what you'd do if *I* went off with some other man?' Thereupon he became angrier than she had ever seen him, got up, stamped about the room, and finally went out into the garden in a fury, to reappear five minutes later, poke his head in at the door, and say with terrific emphasis: 'I'd *curse* ye!' Then the door was slammed and he was not seen again for several hours. Such is the logic of the British paterfamilias.

As time went on expenses increased, income diminished, and his children used to think he was rather optimistic and happy-go-lucky about his affairs. I now question if this was so, anyhow I remember being very much impressed—I was about twenty-one at the time—by the quiet good-humour with which he said one day: 'I'm not such an old fool as you all think.'

His one idea in later years was to rush his six almost portionless daughters into matrimony, and ship his only remaining boy, Bob, off to India; and with one solitary

exception, myself, these plans were realised. During his last illness he insisted on the summary in the *Times* and the leading articles being read to him long after he was past following their drift attentively, and died the death of a good man at seventy-nine, having survived my mother three years. No better testimony to him exists than the simple words our young rector, Mr. Basset, who had worked with him in the parish as curate for many years, spoke in Frimley Church the Sunday after the funeral:

'I cannot finish my sermon without referring to the loss we have sustained in this parish during the last few days. One who was well known to us all, one who was a constant attendant in this Church and read the Lessons here for us for many years, has finished his earthly life.

'He had had a long and eventful career; his youth and early manhood were spent in troublous times. After many years of active work abroad he did not seek his well-earned leisure in retirement as many would have done, but retiring from the Army he at once took an active part in the welfare of the parish he had made his home. We all know the zeal and energy he showed as magistrate, as county councillor, as school manager, as a member of the various committees he served on—a zeal that those much younger than he often wondered at, admired, and almost envied.

'Whatever he undertook he put his whole energy into it; he was never indifferent, he was always hopeful and enthusiastic. His opinion was ever listened to, but he was one of those men who are open to conviction. If he could help anyone in this parish or district his services were always freely given, and many can remember his kind help when advice was required or some wrong had to be righted.

'At public meetings he always spoke out his mind boldly and fearlessly. It seemed impossible for him to swerve from what he felt to be his duty, and from what he thought right, whatever might be the results. But as many of us know, his power lay in his personal character. In many ways it was unique. Hasty and quick in temperament, yet he was kind and considerate—beneath all a gentle and

loving heart, almost a child's. If anger found a place there it soon passed into forgiveness; he could not cherish ill-feeling; it did not exist in his nature.

'It was perhaps only a coincidence, but yet remarkable, that the last time he read the Lessons in this Church was at the close of the Christian year. The Lessons he read were the last in the Calendar. Some noticed then that age and work were telling on him, and that the very words, usually so well read by him, seemed to apply to him that soon the silver cord was to be loosed, the golden bowl broken, the pitcher broken at the fountain, the wheel broken at the cistern. . . .

'He has now passed to his rest, a good Christian, a kind neighbour, a true friend, leaving behind him an example that we should do well to follow.—*St. Peter's, Frimley, April* 8, 1894.

CHAPTER V

My Mother

To produce anything that gave a real idea of my mother's physiognomy was beyond the art of any known photographer; in the same way I half despair of describing, or rather making live again, her strange, difficult, but most lovable personality.

It was a case of baffled genius and injudicious bringing up combined. Whether Bonnemaman settled in Paris before, or only after, her second marriage I cannot say, but in spite of all the family said and did to prevent it my mother was educated in France, and at that time French was more her language than English. Children are always incurious about their parents' early days, and I never knew much about hers, but when a child myself I was deeply struck by her account of a vanished feature in the Champs Elysées, typical of a gay simplicity no longer met with in this grave world.

It appears there was a path leading under a creeper-covered wire archway to a wooden hut in a shrubbery; from the archway swung a picture of a gentleman in green peg-top trousers, who was raising his hat to a lady in a pink skirt and a hat with drooping ostrich feathers, and remarking, according to the legend below:

> 'Madame, il faut que je vous dise adieu,
> Un devoir pressant m'appelle en certain lieu.'

I also recall her telling us, that in the revolution of '48 her mother's windows were barricaded with mattresses,

and that on the wall of the house opposite there was a great splash of blood. Some years previously, owing to the unsatisfactory step-father and other reasons, it had been settled that she should live at Rackheath, near Norwich, the home of her childless uncle, Sir Edward Stracey, and I gather this very handsome 'frenchified' girl, who sang exquisitely, was looked upon as a dangerous interloper by less brilliant relations.

At that time my grandfather Smyth was Director of the Norwich Branch of the Bank of England, and thus it came that she met my father, who was home on leave. The wedding took place from Rackheath in 1848, and in acknowledgment of her offices as mistress of his house her uncle presented her with some very fine diamonds, which, when travelling, she persisted in carrying about on her person for safety; sometimes in a brown paper parcel, mysteriously tied on somewhere, sometimes sewn into a garment, but never in a dressing-case. These diamonds were not entailed, but the family had concluded they would go with the place, and one gathers that feeling ran high on the subject. This cannot have mattered much to her, for my father carried her off directly after their wedding to India, where she stayed, as I said, till shortly before the outbreak of the Mutiny.

Indian society was a small affair in those days, and what with her wit and gaiety, her almost Southern beauty, and her music, she appears to have been a sort of queen out there. And judging by later years, when we wished he would put his foot down oftener, my father may possibly have been an over-indulgent husband.

She really was extraordinarily un-English, whether because she was educated in France, or because her grandmother was a certain Mademoiselle de Lagarde—according to her portrait a wooden-faced young lady, with a huge miniature of a Protestant clergyman, her father no doubt, plastered on to her flat chest. The quick vivid gestures, for instance, were foreign, and I always thought were eyed by my father's sisters with some disfavour on that

account; but above all her way of looking at things was utterly the reverse of what is called insular. I remember a little conversation between us, the finale of which caused one of my aunts to 'bridle.'

MOTHER (*heaping her plate with fried parsley*).—'I do love parsley!'

ETHEL.—'Yes, fried, but not stuck raw in the middle of one's eggs and bacon.'

MOTHER.—'O, I like it even as an ornament; it makes a dish look appetising.'

ETHEL (*sententiously*).—'Do you know I have come to the conclusion I don't like anything that isn't founded on common sense.'

MOTHER (*impulsively*).—'And I infinitely prefer things that are *not* founded on common sense!'

Against English conventionality she was, of course, in secret rebellion, but did her best to conform, as the following fact will surely prove. One of our annual excitements was the arrival of 'Rouillard's box,' a big case sent every Christmas by some old friends of Bonnemaman's, containing French books for children, *pralinés*, and the celebrated barley-sugar that cost me a caning. Père Rouillard was a sculptor, the chief pride of whose life was some bronze eagles he cast for the Tuileries, and which I suppose melted away in 1871. The books were illustrated of course, and when the scene was a domestic interior, a certain piece of crockery was always visible under the bed; this, in deference to English prejudices, my mother would transform with a broad-nibbed pen into a very unsymmetrical top hat, the improbability of the father of the family keeping his *haut de forme* in such a place troubling her not at all. I still have a fascinating picture book showing how a tall plump fairy taught *le petit Martin Landor* his music, aided by slimmer fairies whose heads are crotchets and quavers, and who perform acrobatic feats on rows of telegraph wires which turn out to be the staves. These lessons seem to have been given at night time by means of dreams and visions, and poor Martin is always

either sitting up in bed staring with all his eyes, or being lifted clean out of it by the tall fairy. Thus on every other page is a detail brought into harmony with insular notions of decency by my amazing mother.

To describe her as she was when I remember her best —about the age of the only portrait extant—a detestable one—she was of middle height and was said to have had a beautiful figure in her youth; even in old age she was far from unshapely, and her arms and shoulders were still good to look upon. Her hair was once coal black, but I think she took early in life to *bandeaux* with curls over the forehead, which could be trusted not to turn grey. As her complexion was a warm brunette, slightly helped out by art, the black hair never looked discrepant, though I used to urge her to change it for the soft grey arrangement she admired so in Lady B——; in fact she used to complain I was a 'regular *memento mori.*' Her eyes were her best feature, large, dark brown, melting eyes that Louie told me made them call her in her youth 'the ox-eyed Venus'—the eyes of an artist, of someone with a loving heart—and even as an elderly woman she was considered very handsome, though she can never have been as handsome as her second daughter. But on the other hand it was one of the most expressive faces I have ever seen, and as her moods were many and her passions violent, he who ran might read much on that face.

If ever anyone was meant for social life it was she; I used to wonder at the change that came over her in society, more especially at her gracious hospitality, the perfection of good manners, in her own house. She adored entertaining, and though I used to reproach her in times of financial crisis for her 'love of dress,' I was obliged to admit that, to use the charming French phrase, *elle portait bien la toilette.*

This even in later life; but how I wish I had known her when she was young! One day after her death, Lady Sydney, whom we seldom saw in post-Sidcup days, met

Alice in a shop and began talking of mother, saying that when first they knew her, she and Lord Sydney had agreed that never had they come across such a brilliant being. When she dined with them, all other guests, whether English or foreign, became colourless; not because of her beauty and charm, her wit and vivacity, said Lady Sydney—these things one had met with in others to an equal degree—it was the unique personality. 'Had your mother married a diplomat,' she added, 'she would have been known and acclaimed all over Europe.' And having passed a good deal of my life abroad, I feel sure this is true.

She had a great gift for languages, and besides French and Hindustani knew German, Italian and Spanish. Though she had visited none of the countries in which these languages are spoken except France and India, nor had any practice since her schoolroom days, when occasion demanded, off she would start with fluency and idiomatic correctness, not to speak of an accent she owed to her musical ears.

For her strongest gift was undoubtedly music; she was in fact one of the most naturally musical people I have ever known; how deeply so I found out in after years when she came to Leipzig to see me, and I watched her listening for the first time to a Beethoven symphony, —watched her face softening, tightening, relaxing again as each beauty I specially counted on went home. Old friends maintained that when she was young her singing would have melted a stone, which I can well believe; all the warm, living qualities that made her so lovable must have got into it. When I knew her she had almost lost her voice, but enough remained to judge of its strangely moving timbre. Later on she loved to hear me sing, and it saddens me to think how seldom I gratified her when we were by ourselves; but I always was lazy about singing.

She read at sight very well and her playing of dance music was gorgeously rhythmic. I can see her now, *pince-nez* on nose, rapping out the beloved old 'Lancers,' leading up to the curtsey, gluing us for ever so long to the floor,

and sending us flying back to our places with incredible accent and go. One used to wonder if the children she played for noticed how different it was to the performance of their own mamas, but I greatly doubt it.

The same dramatic instinct made her cross-question us in what we thought the oddest way about incidents of our walks; 'Tell me exactly what happened when you met; did you bow first or did he take off his hat first?' It all had to be visualised.

In those days, Heaven help me! I believed, as men told us, that feminine quickness of intelligence was a sign of superficiality, that it was far cleverer to painfully count up the fingers of each hand than to see at a glance that five and five make ten. I was therefore not as much impressed as I should be now by the extreme rapidity of her mental operations; but I soon noticed that though her judgment on impersonal matters was markedly sound, it was quite another thing when she herself was in question. Many of her children have inherited this very common weakness.

As I said, she had the warmest of hearts, and if violent in temper, was a generous forgiver and forgetter. But alas! capacity for affection and for suffering go hand in hand, especially if you have a vivid imagination and neither instincts nor habits to control it with, which was her case; indeed, whenever I think of her, David Copperfield's phrase about his 'undisciplined heart' comes into my mind. No mother ever tormented herself more strangely. After saying goodnight to us, apparently in a happy frame of mind, perhaps she would not fall asleep at once; and then, as only too often happens with the hypersensitive, the passed day would shine upon her pillow, breeding many woes. Molehills transformed themselves into mountains of pain and despair, and at cockcrow, as it seemed to us, a piteous Odyssey would begin from one bedroom to another—we used to call it 'Morning Calls'—and in each was recited a list of wrongs and cruelties suffered by her at our hands, slights, veiled rudeness, or ridicule, the whole thing as often as not

wholly imaginary. Explanations were seldom of any use, for even in peaceful moments her own point of view tended to obscure that of the other person,—so much so that we often chaffed her about her style of relating a conversation: 'So he said something or other, and I said "*not at all*, that's where you're quite wrong. . . ." '

O! those morning calls, and O! the pitilessness of youth! . . . . Speaking for myself, I fully realised the intense misery of her heart and sometimes met it sympathetically, but more often with impatience and anger. The whole thing was unreasonable, besides which one wanted to go to sleep again.

For these and other reasons she was always to me a tragic figure. Alice, the favourite daughter, who knew her seven years before I did, in younger brighter days, thinks her nature was at bottom a happy one, but the self-tormenting strain must always have been there, waiting to assert itself when youth should wane. She certainly had a great sense of humour and her laugh was wonderfully merry to the last; indeed there were touches of lightness in her that sometimes astonished me. In the midst of a scene of despair, for instance, the arrival of a new bonnet from Paris, or a bunch of roses handed in at the window by the gardener, would transform her at once into the most cheerful of beings. Children are generally little prigs, and this trait, which I now find wholly charming and touching, used to affect me not quite agreeably.

When she was well and happy her talk sparkled with subtle turns and comments—*l'esprit français* in English garb—and nothing used to infuriate me more than the stolid faces of the rural swine for whose benefit these pearls were lavished, but she herself took it with smiling indifference. To see things wittily and express them felicitously came naturally to her, and she no more looked for applause than would a swallow circling and darting about over a meadow. All the same this lack of response must have depressed her unconsciously, for I know that my everlasting delight in the point of her conversation gave her immense pleasure.

In 1875 came the great sorrow of her life, the death of Johnny. This eldest son, of whom his masters predicted great things, had a slight hunting accident; his horse swerved jumping a fence and his knee caught in a bough. That was all; neither of them fell, but he went back to Westminster with a slight limp. Perhaps it was only a tiny displacement that with the help of X-rays might have been located and easily put right; as it was he was pulled about and tortured by surgeons, and taken to Wildbad with no result. Then came the slow agony of realising that all schemes for his future must be abandoned; at last he took to a wheeled chair and died two and a half years after his accident.

Never in all this time did I hear my mother say an angry word to Johnny or even before him; he disliked scenes of all kinds and however close on the brink of the tempest mood she might be, the slightest sign of distress from him would calm her in an instant. I used to wonder at this and might have guessed from it how she loved him and what his death meant to her. But as he had always been inclined to snub me I had no particular devotion for him myself, moreover was wrapped up as always in my own affairs. Thus it came that I never realised till after her own death, that with him most of the sunshine went out of her life.

She was very fond of my father, and always maintained that at a march past no one saluted the flagstaff with a gesture more noble and graceful than he, at the head of the Artillery Brigade! But latterly I think she was a little jealous of his popularity. He appreciated good cooking and had one or two lady friends who loved to give the dear General lunch on his way to and from his county work. When possible he said nothing about these little treats, but sometimes the hostess would innocently let the cat out of the bag, and then . . . well, then I first began to realise that the most salient characteristic of the British male is not moral courage.

Apart from such occasional and definite twinges of

jealousy, I daresay she may have envied him his simple sunny friendliness. As can be imagined if I have described her well, she had any amount of charm when she chose to exercise it, but not the quality I mean, which seldom goes with genius. Possibly she knew certain gifts are denied to the gifted, but if so would not have reconciled herself to the fact.

In later years guests who came to stay were not a success. The first day they were made more than welcome, but we knew the pace could not last, and presently, at mother's request, we were putting about legends calculated to relieve the situation. The usual one was bad news just received, which would cause them on their part to discover their presence was urgently required elsewhere. Visitors whom it was impossible, for some reason or other, to dislodge prematurely, must sometimes have felt they had outstayed their welcome, I fear; and even when visits were short she so wore herself out entertaining, that after dinner only one idea was left, a furious longing for bed. But it was thought uncivil to make a move before 10.30, our canonical hour, and this was always the last straw.

We used to watch with amusement the annual duel between her and one of her cousins, a shrewd pleasant woman with a flow of conversation I have seldom heard equalled, whose hour for retiring was unfortunately 11. When the clock struck 10.30 my mother would say: 'Ah! there's the clock,' and begin spearing her crochet together; but the other considered it was 'dear Nina's' place to yield to her guest's preferences, and the stream flowed smoothly on. It was very agreeable talk, but what is the use of being even brilliant if people want to go to bed? At length when the hour struck she would say in a mild surprised voice: 'Is that eleven o'clock already?' and slowly roll up her own knitting. Never once did my mother carry her point, and I could not help suspecting a touch of malice in this phrase taken from one of her later letters to me: 'Poor Georgiana still lingers on, but gets weaker every day—they say she talks *incessantly*, but is very seldom conscious.'

As time went on her hearing went more quickly down hill, and nothing makes greater demands on sanity of judgment than deafness. I am certain, too, that she was a classical case of what is now-a-days called auto-intoxication, and that this, combined with internal weakness such as often afflicts mothers of large families, chiefly accounted for the uncertainty of her moods. After the girls were all married, Bob being in India, I lived at home, and frankly confess there was no house large enough to hold her and me. When away, even on a short visit, the lovableness of her so completely took possession that I used to say to myself: 'This time when I go back there will be no more rows,' but after a day or two the old story began again. Far be it from me to say it was all her fault; I was not nicknamed 'the stormy petrel' for nothing; but I do think not even a saint could have lived in peace with her, if only because she had nothing definite to do and over much time for brooding.

In those days things were planned as a matter of course from the point of view of the male only, and no one ever gave a thought to the inequality of interest in the lives of men and women of her generation. My father was free to create for himself as many outside duties as he chose; but my mother, unaccustomed from youth upwards, and I think averse by nature, to country life; no walker, caring nothing for sport, which was not the fashion for girls in her day . . . what should she do, shut up through long autumns and winters in a country house not 300 yards from the Basingstoke Canal and its mists? It was all very well as long as there were girls to take out, but I lived my own life of work and games, and was not much of a companion; meanwhile, for at least half the year, to go out calling in a shut carriage was supposed to be all the excitement a Mama on the shelf could possibly need.

Such is the force of custom that I think she only realised by degrees what poor fun this was. I remember her complaining humorously yet rather bitterly of a way the coachman had, when in a bad temper, of suddenly lashing

the horses and making them go on with a bound that nearly jerked her head off. Calling once on a very dull neighbour who lived four miles away, the carriage having by some misunderstanding gone off home, when she realised that there was no immediate escape from the intolerable boredom of her friend, she fainted dead away.

True she was physically indolent, and would sit for ages, her toes on the fender, her skirt turned back over an embroidered white petticoat, staring peacefully into the fire. At such times she would often draw eights in the air with one foot, and only a few years ago my friend Lady Ponsonby, who never saw her, suddenly said to me: 'Do you know when you are thinking you draw eights in the air with your toe?' This trick of my mother's rather got on our nerves, and Nina, who never used elaborate language, but often fell asleep after dinner, even in those early days, once astonished us by drowsily murmuring: 'It is taking no exercise that gives her that regrettable flexibility of the muscles.' Nevertheless if it was a question of starting for her annual pilgrimages to Homburg or Wiesbaden, where the change of scene and the listening to music delighted her, or of going up to London, when fit, to the play or to concerts, in short of doing anything that amused her, this indolence vanished like magic. Mercifully she was fond of reading—(I remember jeering at her once for saying: 'I like books about Africa'); but you can't read all day, and hours upon hours must have hung like lead on her hands.

In a word, if bad health was one cause of trouble, another was boredom—boredom to death; yet no one tried harder, especially in later years, 'to be good' as children say, and that is why I dare not dwell in thought on several incidents in our mutual life, dreading the inevitable rush of useless remorse. In the winter of 1890-91 matters came to a crisis; one day she announced quite suddenly that, more or less crippled as she was for half the year, she could stand Frimhurst no longer and must really live in London! . . . It was tragic—this dream of beginning

life afresh at 66, these visions of theatres, concerts, and other distractions for which she no longer had health and strength! . . . I think she herself felt the hopelessness of the idea, for a few days later she told me she had abandoned it, and meant to try and make the best of things as they were. . . .

Meanwhile, little as we knew it, her days were numbered; she suddenly fell ill, and three weeks after that outburst, we buried her beside Johnny in Frimley churchyard,—this mother with whom I fought so desperately, whom I loved so dearly, and of whose presence I grow daily more and more conscious. . . .

Of her death I cannot speak, except to say that it was piteous, heroic, and probably unnecessary. Had the doctor at once recognised what was wrong, had a surgeon been fetched without delay, perhaps her life might have been saved. Of these things, too, it is useless to think; but as time goes on my certainty increases, mercifully for me, that some day we shall have a chance of making good our shortcomings towards those whose memory haunts us most abidingly—the people who really loved us.

CHAPTER VI

A Retrospect

In 1867, my father having been given command of the Artillery at Aldershot, we left Sidcup, and took up our abode at Frimhurst in the village of Frimley, a couple of miles from Farnborough, where I lived till his death in 1894.

On the chance that other people rush as eagerly as I do to any window, no matter how humble, from which a glimpse into the past may be obtained, this seems as good a place as any to stop for a moment and try to give an idea of the social framework in which a family such as ours was set in the early seventies—a period which now seems almost as remote as 'Cranford.'

It must be borne in mind that unlike the scene of that delightful book, Frimley was even then not a real country neighbourhood. The proximity of the biggest camp in England, the Staff College, and Sandhurst, brought a great deal of amusement in its train, and also that rarest element in the country, an unfailing supply of men—a consideration when you have six daughters to marry. This factor no doubt weighed with my father when, on the expiration of his Aldershot command, he decided to buy Frimhurst; besides which, as the heads of big units were automatically called on by the county families, we already knew what was dreadfully styled 'the nice people.' On reflection I think the presence of a large floating population brought rather an unstable element into life. At first there was an attempt to interest us in household duties, and we took it in turn to solemnly unlock the storeroom door and watch the cook weighing out 10 lbs. of rice and 12 lbs. of sugar; but by degrees this ideal lapsed, and ended, much

to the relief of the younger members of the family, in a sort of budget system, checked on Saturdays by Papa.

About one thing there was no slackness; neighbourliness and entertaining were looked on as duties; everyone who had a garden gave garden parties, and those who had the means dinner parties, on which latter occasions terrible things went on after dinner in the way of music. One of our neighbours belonging to the ' nice people ' class never dined out without his cornet-à-piston, on which instrument he would blast forth ' Ah che la morte ognora,' accompanied by his gentle smiling wife, who said the cornet box was so nice in the brougham, keeping one's feet out of the draught. As for calling, that duty ranked immediately after going to Church on Sunday, but it was an axiom that the more exalted the old resident's social position, the less would be the alacrity shown in swallowing fresh bait. Thus from lips of persons trembling on the verge of friendliness you often heard the remark: ' So and so hasn't called yet.' I suppose this is human nature but it seems very snobbish and ridiculous.

Incidentally, by way of keeping up the moral tone of the neighbourhood, cruel actions would be committed. I remember one couple, humdrum and apparently respectable to a fault; he, a big, blowsy, rather foolish-looking man, less like a Lovelace than any male on this planet; she, tall, elegant in the washed-out style; both of them more than humble and apologetic, as was only right, for it was darkly rumoured that once upon a time things had not been as they should between them. It had all happened, if ever, long ago, and meanwhile here they were in our midst, childless, middle-aged, and tightly married; none the less ostracism, mitigated but inflexible, was their lot. They were asked to the large garden parties, seldom to small ones, and never, never to dinner. . . . Yes! once, for the wife of a Staff College officer, the Hon. Mrs. Somebody, whose forgotten name and kind heart I bless, actually did ask the outcasts to dine, and for a moment their stocks went up with a bound. But after all the Hon. Mrs. Some-

body, though an aristocrat, was a bird of passage, whose vagaries should not influence the settled attitude of permanent residents, so back the poor couple went to the Arctic Circle.

If any clergyman should read these lines let me tell him that I, a child, often wondered how this sort of thing squared with the Christian charity talked about in the pulpit. Children accept many strange things unquestioningly, still more they never notice at all, but that thing I noticed sharply and felt about as violently as I do now. Had anyone spoken in this sense to our old rector, I can imagine his embarrassment, the nervous giggle, the mumbled platitude, the hasty retreat; for he was not, and did not pretend to be, a strenuous priest, but simply an incumbent of the old school—that is a man of good family and education, who looked upon his rectorship as a sinecure, and would have considered special attention to the morals and spiritual needs of his flock eccentric and rather impertinent.

Then there were the county balls to which of course residents subscribed, and at which the humbler county families had the privilege of mingling with the magnates and trying to identify the brilliant units of their house parties. At Guildford the ball was not supposed to have really started till the contingents from East Horsley Towers, Peper Harow, and Clandon had arrived; and quantities of people only began to enjoy themselves when the grandees, who seldom stayed long, had departed, taking with them the deadly hypnotic power they exercised over the smaller fry.

Of course these great ones gave balls, also humbler people like ourselves, but we called them dances. To step for a moment out of our neighbourhood: staying in Yorkshire, when I was about sixteen, with the mother of a school-friend, I was taken to Wentworth, where once a week, all the time they were in residence, Lord and Lady Fitzwilliam received any friends and acquaintances who chose to come. Lord Fitzwilliam, who was then

Lord-Lieutenant, wore breeches, silk stockings, and his Garter ribbon, and everything, including the stand-up supper, was most gorgeous, yet somehow or other homely. There might be 40 guests, there might be 150, according to the weather, and these entertainments must have cost a great deal, but thus did Lord Fitzwilliam conceive his duty towards his neighbour. I remember that my hostess, a cousin of Lady Fitzwilliam and herself a woman of very good family, made a little curtsey when she greeted the lady of the house—a survival of respect for office which struck me curiously and agreeably. The whole thing was a glimpse of an epoch even then belonging to the past.

To return to Frimhurst. The military environment of course affected the rural population and indeed may be said to have created Frimley, which, originally a few straggling cottages on the verge of a big stretch of heather-land, only became an independent village when Aldershot was selected as site for the camp. Hence there were very few old farmhouses about, but in one of these, of which only a ruined cart-shed now remains, I have tasted home-made gooseberry wine—a beverage now almost as mythical as metheglyn. I wonder how many miles west of Frimley you would have to travel nowadays to find a farm where it is still concocted?

Of our relations with the villagers I have few recollections, nor were they typical, because there was little feudal tradition in such a neighbourhood, and that little in course of extinction. Partly from egotism, but mainly, I honestly think, because it always struck me as indiscreet, I myself did little visiting among our poorer neighbours. But the associations of a common youth are imperishable things, and between myself and contemporary Frimleyites, especially younger ones who were in my Sunday-School class, a very tender bond still exists, though I don't see them often. I remember that extremely poor old women used to come up on Saturdays for soup, and when a doctor's order could be produced, for a bottle of port. There also were presents at Christmas, and one old woman once wrote

to my mother: ' If there are any flannel petticoats or other Xmas gifts going I shall be found very acceptable.'

This of course was private charity—what a foreign cook of ours called ' giving to the door '—but on the subject of official outdoor relief my father held, in common with most poor law guardians, what the women of his family used to think unsympathetic views. The strong objection felt by every villager I have ever come across to ' the House ' was in his opinion unreasonable and pig-headed, specially, perhaps, because he took immense trouble about his own Farnham Union and described it as a sort of earthly paradise. Alas! though the horrors exposed in ' Oliver Twist ' had been abolished, their memory was in the blood of the people. It seems to me that willingness to get along anyhow at home, rather than be obviously on the parish, is not without dignity, and if outdoor relief is actually being received you still are keeping up appearances—a decent form of the hypocrisy so dear to English minds. But to understand all this requires imagination, my father's weak point.

Where the question was one of level-headedness and common sense he never failed. For instance when the County Council schemes destroyed the monopoly of the gentry to sit on the Bench, many of his brother magistrates were prepared to resign rather than act on terms of equality with the grocer; but my father maintained it was more than ever the duty of men of breeding and education to stick to the ship, and keep touch with the class in whose hands more and more power was likely to be placed. The result was that not one of the old magistrates resigned.

On one point I am of course absolutely ignorant, the morality of our rural population. After the revelations that came to all women in the fight for the vote, and since I myself reached an age at which it is possible to glean first-hand evidence, and know how even the best and most decent ' good fellows ' of one's own acquaintance live, what chiefly amazes me is the contrast between the smooth surface of society and the orgiastic whirlpool below. This

surface, particularly smooth in England, is worked up by each race according to its genius and must be assumed to be a necessity, but it is strange to think how completely women of my generation were taken in by it. Of course with the vote, the worst evils, bred of our complete divorce from reality, will be gradually removed, which is better than nothing—being about as much as the individual who attempts to reform his own character can hope for.

It is a commonplace to mention the decrease of drunkenness, but I do it because if, as a child, you were in the habit of walking about country lanes, the altered state of things comes home to you with more force than as a thesis found in a pamphlet on social evolution. It was quite usual then to see men reeling about the roads on Saturdays and Sundays, now it is quite the exception. So much so that on hearing recently how the stately footman of a friend of ours was ordered to descend from the box and assist an invalid in the ditch, who turned out to be an old gipsy woman, exceedingly drunk and only equal to ejaculating repeatedly: ' Blesh you, darlin', blesh you, darlin',' one had quite a sentimental old-times feeling.

In conclusion, if these general observations seem, as they do to me, somewhat meagre, it only proves what was said before—that life in our neighbourhood was not of the classical well-ordered rural type, but rather a foretaste of the cinema.

CHAPTER VII

1867 TO 1872

I HAVE been trying to recall whether up to the time of our migration to Frimhurst I had shown a special bent for music. Probably, for Père Rouillard specially mentioned that 'Martin Landor' was for 'la petite musicienne.' I don't think I composed in the Sidcup days, but Mary and I sang little duets, simple tunes to which I put 'seconds' as it was called, and in the quality of those seconds and my accompaniments, I myself, had I been listening, should certainly have detected a natural gift. But to judge these things takes an expert, and my mother had had no real musical training. Transposing and playing by ear came naturally to me, but so it did to her, so she would not have been much impressed by that; or perhaps she thought I was conceited enough without special encouragement as regards my music; anyhow I cannot remember hearing or thinking much about it.

On a very hot September afternoon we arrived at North Camp Station, and I was one of a detachment that walked the two and a half miles to Frimhurst along the pretty Basingstoke Canal, past Mitchett lake, scene of many future boating excursions. My father's walking powers were certainly unimpaired at that time, for I remember trotting occasionally in order to keep up with him and wishing he would not walk so fast. Dragonflies were poising and darting among the reeds. I had never seen any before and thought them the most beautiful things imaginable.

The entrance to the grounds may have played a part in my father's decision to take Frimhurst, for it is the sort of entrance that makes an owner modest about the rent. At this point the South-Western Railway passes under the canal, and for about twenty yards the carriage drive is actually a bit of the towing-path—on the one side the low tunnel-parapet, on the other some rickety posts and rails fencing the canal, so that you are between the devil and the deep sea. My father, who had an eye for a horse, generally bought quadrupeds capable of dragging a heavy landau full of people to Church in single harness; for on Sundays the principle was cruelty to animals, balanced by kindness to the stable men, who thus had only one set of harness to clean. Our horses therefore were seldom of the well-bred nervy type, but often young and imperfectly trained, so it may be imagined what happened when, with a sudden roar, a train dashed out of the tunnel and sent a cloud of steam swirling into their faces. I only once saw actual evidence of an accident myself, an Artillery waggon and pair having just gone through the posts and rails; the horses were calmly standing in midstream as if that had been their original destination, waiting for the driver to return with help. After a year or two, in deference to my mother's entreaties, the height of the parapet was increased, which slightly improved matters.

There are two celebrated incidents connected with the tunnel, the first being such an amazing example of human stupidity that is almost incredible, but I witnessed it myself. Hearing a train coming, a cousin of ours, aged about twenty-five, rushed like mad to the spot, stared at the canal, and then said in tones of deep disappointment: 'Why, they told me the smoke comes up through the water!!'

The second incident is far more credible. Not long after our arrival at Frimhurst Papa got a letter from the Railway Company, saying that boys were in the habit of hurling stones and other missiles on to the trains from the parapet, a large piece of brick having recently missed a stoker's head by a hairbreadth; and that as it was on

his property would he please put a stop to the nuisance. On this occasion he modified his views regarding the methods of the police, and bade a constable hide behind the hedge and watch. One day the man came up to the house and reported he had identified the culprit. 'Why didn't you bring him up here?' said my father, 'I'd have rubbed his ears for him and told his mother to give him a good hiding.' 'Well sir,' answered the constable, 'it's very awkward, but it's one of your young ladies'; and as a matter of fact I was the culprit. O! the excitement of it, the preliminary piling up of ammunition and dropping of one trial stone; the rumble that told you the train had entered the tunnel; the quick guess at its pace, and the chance, supposing you had missed the tender, that something might yet be done with the final guard's van, which would emerge . . . when? I can feel the thrill of it now!

At the other end of our property was another railway bridge called 'Deepcut,' which gives an idea of the place. Like my father I always encourage friends' and relations' children to take risks, especially if they are cursed with timorous parents, so I hope it is not too conceited to say that I really was a daring little girl myself. Nowadays I often bike over Deepcut bridge, and not for less than £50 would I do to-day what I often did then, run along the parapet. Let me confess that I was terrified, just as in later years during perilous climbs in the Alps; and this is the fascination of both performances.

A home you came to know in later life can never be as poetical a memory as one you left when very young and never saw again. Still Frimhurst was an attractive place, a far bigger and better house than Sidcup, bounded on one side, it is true, by the deep railway cutting, on the banks of which rabbit ferreting at once became a passion, but on the other, as a compensation, is a really picturesque section of the old canal, out of which opened a lake owned by a neighbour, where we fished and learned to skate. There were about thirty-two acres of grounds, and I think the pasturage must have been poor, as my father was for

ever spreading over it a special sort of manure that seemed to consist chiefly of brickbats, sardine tins, and old boots. By and by, when the golf passion surged into England, we vamped up a home course, and this strange manure gave trouble playing through the green, lost balls being found in the broken base of blacking bottles and other difficult places. Near the canal was a delightful orchard; one tree in it, a white-heart cherry-tree with spreading branches, was the scene of many of my climbing feats and Mary's sentimental trial-trips, for the cherry-tree was the favourite haunt of a long series of boy-lovers. I have a tragic vision of my mother in that orchard, crying as if her heart would break, the doctor having just told her there was but a slender chance of rearing Bob, the last baby.

Lower down the canal is a series of locks, across the gates of which it was Johnny's and my delight to run. Mary, who was liable to sudden giddiness, joined in this amusement, though unwillingly, and had a system of letting herself down towards the centre of the gates, a leg on each side, and shuffling across, which was unladylike but better than drowning. Nina, who also had a bad head, would be urged onwards by a hat pin applied to her fat calves.

Round the canal many memories linger. I often look now-a-days at a 'flash' near our entrance-lodge, and think about children's first terrified glimpses of Death; for there a little boy, whom we noticed wading as we crossed the bridge one day, lost his footing, and was carried home a corpse to his mother before we came back again across the bridge. I remember Alice telling me God had taken the little boy to Himself, that all was well with him, and that I must not be so terror-stricken and miserable about it. . . .

My father always said what finally decided him to take Frimhurst was the fine drawing-room which would make 'such a nice room for your mother.' It certainly was delightful in summer, but nowadays would hardly be considered habitable in the winter, with its solitary fireplace

and five French windows, three of which were in the bow window where my poor mother used to write her letters. Central heating was then unknown in England, and my father would have considered it a most unhealthy invention, but I am certain the appalling cold of that room, and of her big bedroom above it, must have been still more unhealthy for one leading a sedentary life. Indeed I often wonder whether the slowness of thought that characterises our race is not the result of an insane objection to warm rooms ending in congealed brain.

The schoolroom was in the oldest part of the house. The windows, sort of square port-holes, to see out of which you had to stand up, were shuttered at night by sliding mirrors. Running under them horizontally on the outside wall were ivy branches as thick as a man's arm, the furry coating of which was worn to the bone by the boots of climbing children. All our many governesses resembled each other in one particular; that when reading after supper on summer's evenings they would see ghostly heads peeping in at the portholes, shoot the shutters with a bang, and rush into the passage screaming 'burglars.'

This room was the only one with charm in an otherwise commonplace but very comfortable house.

It was in the year following our arrival at Frimhurst that Bob, the boy who was to console my mother for the coming loss of Johnny, was born. He was a very quiet delicate child, and according to a family legend never spoke till the day he was sitting under the table, clipping the cat's fur with a pair of scissors, and told to desist; whereupon he suddenly burst into speech with the remark 'All the cats in the *wairld* aren't yours!' and never ceased talking afterwards. It is odd that all I can remember of the two youngest children in their extreme youth is this legend, and a riddle asked by Nelly: 'If a new-laid egg could speak what jam would it mention?' Answer: 'Ma-laid-me.' (*Mar-me-lade.*)

Johnny was now a Westminster boy. My father's youngest sister had married Dr. Charles Scott who at this time was Head Master of Westminster, and Mary and I sometimes spent the night at their house in Dean's Yard. From our window we had a grand view of the boys playing racquets against the schoolhouse wall, or flying into school in their trenchers; and occasionally we caught sight of my uncle, in cap and gown, sweeping across the school yard, always in a violent hurry. It was understood that if we met Johnny in the cloisters or any other part of the dear old buildings we must make no sign of recognition and expect to be cut. We were.

This childless uncle and aunt always spent Christmas with us, hardly a comfortable arrangement I should think for Johnny; but he was a more than satisfactory pupil, and my cold, stately, alarming aunt worshipped him—as I remember suddenly realising when, in a letter she wrote my mother after his death, I read the words: 'He was the apple of my eye.' Of my uncle we were terrified in our early days. He was really one of the dearest, warmest-hearted of men, but every inch a schoolmaster, and I never knew anyone who suffered fools less gladly. His severe manner, intolerance of contradiction, and general dictatorialness, amounting I fear to quarrelsomeness, were supposed to stand in his way when Bishops were being nominated; but aloofness from intrigue and time-serving probably hampered him still more. He always preached the Christmas sermon in Frimley Church, which was looked forward to as a great intellectual treat by the congregation.

On Christmas Day we children came down to dinner, and after snapdragons and punch, grown-ups and all played round games, generally 'commerce.' When my father began explaining what card one ought to have played Uncle Charles would say in his high-pitched, querulous voice: 'Now John, do let an old schoolmaster make the matter clear to the child,' and proceed to do this in a manner so involved, that my mother, whom he was very fond of, once exclaimed: 'Really, Charles, I don't know if you

understand your own explanations, but no one else can.' She was more than free and unabashed with this alarming personality, a freedom which filled us with the same awe as did the ways of Colonel O'H—— with Papa. One day, driving with him through Aldershot, he dozing on the opposite seat, she poked him hard with her parasol and said: 'Do wake up: they'll think I am driving through the camp with a tipsy clergyman.' I remember once, in one of those silences that sometimes fall on a large party, asking quite innocently: 'What is a pedagogue?' Result; still deader silence, and then everyone laughed rather nervously.

Daily as the clock struck twelve these two would sally forth on a constitutional up the Windmill Hill just outside our gates, and afford a spectacle rare, I think, in England, but which may be enjoyed on Sundays throughout the whole German Empire; that is he always stalked along a good ten yards in front of his wife. Thus they started, and thus they returned at 12.45, and while kicking off his galoshes in the porch he would hold the door open and say impatiently: 'Come along, Susan' (with a slight accent on the second syllable) and she would give a little nervous giggle to which she was subject, but not hurry in the very least. This was the invariable ritual. When their visit was concluded, a fly and pair was heaped up with maid and luggage and they started on a ten-mile drive across Fox Hills and the Hog's Back, along a beautiful road since closed to all but the military, to pay Christmas visit Number 2 to another cousin of his, Lord Midleton. For some time afterwards Peper Harow rang, as did Frimhurst, with anecdotes about what Uncle Charles said to the lodge-keeper who hoped he was quite well, or to the rash lady who asked if schoolmastering was not a very interesting task? When he was about to annihilate somebody he would begin with an impatient, almost larmoyant, 'My dear Sir' or 'Madam,' which caused a hush to fall upon the assembly, sportsman, lover, or bore breaking off his tale to be in at the death. I don't think he was a popular

Head Master, though greatly respected; but only in private life did you get to know the real man.

. . . . . .

Once, many years after the time I am speaking of, a tragedy happened on that bit of closed country on the Fox Hills. There are rifle butts up there, and one foggy day hounds ran into the danger zone. Suddenly realising where he was the Master began blowing his horn frantically, and while one of our Frimley neighbours was saying to her son: 'I wonder what that's for?' the boy fell from his horse dead at her feet, a stray bullet having passed through his brain.

CHAPTER VIII

1867 TO 1872

LIFE at Frimhurst up to the time I came out falls into two periods, the governess and the school epochs. Our governesses never stayed long; they pass before my mind's eye in dreary procession; some English, others German; some with dyspepsia, others with unfortunate natures, —perhaps the same thing under different names; nearly always ugly, and quite invariably without the faintest notion of making lessons either pleasant or profitable. Certainly we were difficult pupils, naughty and refractory to discipline, still we were quite intelligent children, and later on Mary and I learned something at school; but excepting one, who without intending it determined my course in life, our governesses might have been lay-figures for all we got out of them. I think the whole governess system monstrous and unworkable; even as a child I vaguely understood how impossible is the position of these poor unwilling intruders into the family circle, and hope time will evolve some more civilised scheme of education for 'the daughters of the nobility and gentry.' On the other hand our governesses were specimens of humanity few families, however kind-hearted, could assimilate.

I have said I was subject to 'passions' as I called them, and about this time drew up a list of over a hundred girls and women to whom, had I been a man, I should have proposed; it is therefore no great tribute to the charms of Miss Hammond, the first governess I remember, that her name figured on the list of passions. She was young, rather pretty, and wore a chignon which she told us was her own hair. Perhaps she meant in the sense that she had paid

for it, for alas! one day she slipped up on the ice and away rolled the chignon like the heart in Richepin's terrifying ballad, but without asking its owner if she had hurt herself. I said nothing; one is too paralysed by dreadful emotion to speak at such moments, but then and there my passion expired.

And now comes the recital of one of the ugliest things I ever did. A few months later Miss Hammond departed for good in the same low pony-chaise with which these records begin . . . and as it sped down the drive I clung on to the back, hissed in her ear: 'I know your chignon is false!' and dropped off. I was quite aware that my action was hateful, but it is not till old age is in sight that sincerity-mad people can quietly let a deceiver think his deception has been a success.

H. B., the great friend of my maturer years, and the wisest man I ever knew, had agreeable views on the subject of making up; he said it predisposed him in a person's favour, as showing a wish to please. I quite see this point of view, but it is not mine, and in my youth I felt about it so violently that I remember telling my mother, who was demonstrative and craved for demonstration, that I should kiss her much oftener but for her 'powder and things.' 'Things' stood for the very moderate amount of rouge and kohl with which, as I said, she repaired the ravages of time, and I am glad to say my remark produced not the slightest change in this innocent habit.

One of Miss Hammond's successors presented my mother with the most astonishing specimen of German ingenuity I have ever seen, except perhaps similar souvenirs fabricated by the Grand Dukes and Duchesses who clustered round Goethe in his country retreat, and deigned to live the simple life there. This treasure is made of thin wire, small black beads, and eight locks cut from the eight heads of the Smyth children, and represents a bunch of blackberries, the berries being made of beads, and the leaves—how she did it I cannot think—of hair. There were all shades in our family, from black to flaxen, but though the leaves

are still shapely and tidy, age and dust have wrought them all to the same dull hue. By immemorial custom this strange object has lived under a glass shade, stuck into one of Prince Charlie's goblets, and there it is, confronting me at this moment.

During the Franco-Prussian war, when we had a rather feeble-minded German governess, we used to rush in to her first thing in the morning announcing imaginary German defeats—and the poor governess never saw the papers till evening! We were too young to have any bias one way or the other, though my mother of course was all for the French; it was just the ferocious playfulness of youth. The world is now accustomed to the sanctimonious tone of the Hohenzollern telegrams, but then it was a novelty and caused much astonishment. There was a paraphrase by Mr. Punch of one of the King of Prussia's effusions to his Queen which delighted Papa:

> By Heaven's will, my dear Augusta,
> We've had another awful buster,
> Ten thousand Frenchmen gone below!
> Praise God from Whom all blessings flow!

By such trivial incidents do great contemporary events hook themselves into the memory of a child. Except the fact that we all picked lint, these are my only recollections connected with a war of which the whole world has not yet finished reaping the harvest! . . .

Besides the catalogue of 'passions' I drew up a paper I would give anything to study to-day—a list of things to be avoided when one should be grown up. One was 'never tell people what your parents used to say,' my mother having a way of quoting, for our benefit, axioms used against her in her childhood by her own mother, which made us think Bonnemaman must have been a most disagreeable person. Apart from this, one noticed that the words 'As my father used to say' strike a chill at all times and in all places. There was another golden rule I have since broken only too often, alas! never to speak of one's digestion

(unless to the doctor, who, as Lady Constance Leslie once remarked, is paid to put up with that style of conversation). This rule came on to the list because of an objectionable habit one of our governesses had, of extending herself after lunch in an armchair, her legs stuck out stiffly, and many cushions rammed into her back—her body being thus in a straight line at an angle of 45° to the floor, which posture she considered favourable to digestion. People who remember their childhood will guess how fiercely we resented this spectacle.

Under the eye of successive governesses we painfully translated into French and German stories such as George Washington saying: 'Father, I cannot tell a lie, *I* cut down that apple tree!' or Newton wagging his head at the dog that had just devoured his astronomical notes and merely remarking: 'O Diamond, Diamond, you do not know what mischief you have done!' (which shows he was not fit to keep a dog). These two odious anecdotes might well implant in childish bosoms a life-long aversion to the qualities of truthfulness and self-command. In short we pursued the usual course of instruction in the usual manner. But one thing I will say: from Mrs. Markham's 'History of England,' a book recently re-read with delight, I learned all the history I knew till the day dawned for loving Shakespeare, and consider these two together can defy the Universe as quickeners of an historical sense in the young.

Between lesson hours, and of course in the holidays, we had heaps of fun. Our end of Frimley consisted of a few houses grouped about a village green, and if I were to be asked who looms largest in my mind during those years I should unhesitatingly say: 'Mrs. Hall of the tin-shop,' the unforgettable owner of the emporium where everything from sweets to carpets could be got. Shrewd, good-looking, quick-tempered, as full of kindness as of mother-wit, and a mistress of lightning repartee, this true descendant of Mrs. Poyser ruled her husband and four big sons, mostly farm labourers, with a rod of iron, and spoiled us children

to our hearts' content. Heaven only knows what amount of sweets she gave away in overweight. There too I bought the penny whistles to which we danced Sir Roger de Coverley on the ice—for our skating days had now dawned—and let me say that to dance on skates and play that particularly breathless tune at the same time is one of the most exhausting feats in the world.

The village boasted an annual fair, long since gone the way of most country fairs, and great fun we found it; but the appearance presented by the Green after the merry-go-rounds and cocoa-nut shie were gone, left me with so disagreeable an impression as almost to put me off the fair itself—on which theme, if one were a poet and classical scholar, a neat Latin Ode might be written.

We always had one, sometimes two donkeys; the other day a grey-headed man in Frimley told me he remembered, as school-boy, my riding into the village school right among the children, mounted on a black donkey. One of my most cherished possessions is the sketch, already referred to, by our cousin Hugo of a drive in the donkey cart—a sketch which incidentally shows that structural differences in Mary's and my character, though concealed by the childish plumpness of our moral outline, did not escape this shrewd observer's eye. Calm and unmoved, neatly shod in the drab boots with shiny toes I remember so well, her profile indicates the total detachment of a young lady out for an airing. That picture has special mention in my Will.

Sometimes we raised, I cannot think how, a team of four, and the harness-room was raided for reins and traces; this four-in-hand was a grand thing to talk about but not really a success, for one had to crawl along the backs of the wheelers in order to thump the leaders with the butt end of the whip. I cannot recall either Johnny or Mary taking the initiative in these donkey affairs, and Nina, whose subsequent adventures would fill tomes, was not then old enough to join in ours. In fact all I can remember about her at that period was her approaching Violet one

day, obviously uneasy in her mind, and saying she had something ' very funny ' to show her in the rosery. It turned out to be two expiring frogs which she had impaled; . . . the hour of confession had struck!

Frimley Church was two miles off, a modern building, monument of some architect's whole-hearted devotion to hideousness, the only sympathetic feature being an old-fashioned three-decker pulpit, but even that was of deal and relatively new. At each Church Festival the donkey cart was piled up with whatever might be the appropriate fruits of nature, and off we started to decorate the Church, the great point being lunch with a kind old neighbour close by. I have said that as a tiny child I was terrified of churchyards, but at this time they must have had a morbid attraction, or perhaps it was under the influence of ' Hamlet ' that I loved to watch the sexton at work and ' think of graves and worms and epitaphs ' as the young will—and as the old won't. It may be remembered too, that in order to increase the agony of love I would cheerfully consign my ' passions ' to an early grave, but as regards myself terrors of Death haunted me throughout my youth, and it was perhaps with some vague idea of conjuring the spectre that I persuaded the sexton to give me a human bone, which I hid among my collars and handkerchiefs. But this relic left me no peace, for I knew its possession was sacrilegious, and at last in floods of tears confessed all to my mother. I think she was a good deal taken aback, but explained quite gently that it would never do, when the Day of Judgment comes, for people's limbs to be scattered about in different places. Evidently she had never read, or did not go with, a work called ' The Last Day ' from which Mr. Gosse quotes, in his book ' Father and Son,' the following remarkable verse:

> Now charnels rattle, scattered limbs, and all
> The various bones, obsequious to the call,
> Self-mov'd advance—the neck perhaps to meet
> The distant head, the distant legs the feet.

Meanwhile she undertook to have the bone put back in the place it came from, and later informed me that all was well, the sexton having assured her it was a sheep's bone, and that he never would have dreamed of giving me human remains. I often wonder if this was a legend invented by her to soothe my inflamed and suffering imagination, or whether the sexton, afraid of getting into trouble, really hazarded this improbable yarn.

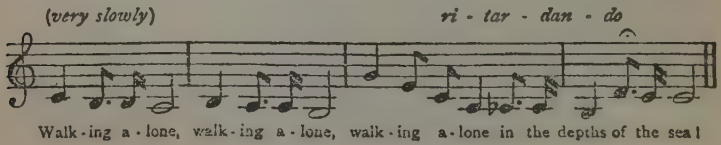
I call him the sexton, but he was only an understudy, the real one being ninety-six and long past grave-digging, but to the end he stuck to his post of clerk. Seated in the lowest box of the three-decker, his gold-rimmed spectacles poised on the very tip of his nose, his old forefinger travelling across the pages of a huge prayer-book as smoothly as the hands of a clock, he would bleat out an amazing long 'A—mä-ä-ä-ä-n' that would throw rapid performers like Uncle Charles out of their stride. People used to come from neighbouring parishes to hear old Mr. Weston say 'Amen.'

A fantastic scene, which no one who saw it can ever have forgotten, once took place in the three-decker. As I said, my uncle always preached on Christmas morning, but one Christmas there was another clerical star staying in the parish, who had been asked to take the service, and understood he was also to oblige with a sermon. He had duly read the Prayers from the middle box, and had just opened the door, preparatory to climbing up into the highest or preacher's box, when my uncle, who had been sitting robed within the Altar rails, came sweeping along at his usual rushing pace and also made for the top box. They met on the narrow staircase, each with a tightly rolled manuscript in his hand, and a rather heated altercation took place, neither being of the nature that gives way. What with the shape of the three-decker, and the baton-like appearance of the manuscripts, there was more than a slight suggestion of Mr. Punch and the policeman. I cannot remember who won the day, though I feel sure it must have been my uncle, but the aged clerk, cross-questioned about this scandalous incident, said he really

didn't know what to make of it; and it probably was too much for him, for he died soon afterwards.

In the summer there were picnics on the canal, and plenty of canoeing though none of us could swim. I remember seeing a black thing crawling out of the water in our wake which we all thought was the retriever, but it turned out to be Nina smothered in canal mud. Not long after our arrival at Frimhurst, lawn tennis, preceded by badminton, became the fashion, and I think for a time everything was dropped for that. We no longer built but bought racing craft, without neglecting other carpentering. I know I was a better hand at it than either Johnny or Maunsell B——. My three-legged stools and tables may have been less ambitious than theirs but they neither wobbled nor broke down, and started in me at an early age the complete confidence I was to feel later in woman as co-architect of the State.

In the winter there were entertainments at the schools on whatever Saturday in the month had most moon. At one of these I made my first public appearance, singing duets at the age of eleven with Mary, aged thirteen, and mother accompanied us in order to give my voice a better chance. Papa was nearly always on the programme, reading poems such as ' The Raven,' ' We are Seven,' and extracts from ' The Siege of Corinth,' which the modern rustic mind, fed on cheap novelettes and cinema, would not stand for a moment, but I think they liked it then. Other neighbouring gentry contributed items and passing talent was enlisted. I remember an enormously stout bird of passage who had a habit cultivated by many more famous contralti of ' singing like a man ' as I called it, and in this deep chest voice she used to give us a song much in vogue called ' The Diver.' In case this work has vanished from the market, I cannot help quoting the music of the refrain,



surely more realistic and funny than most things on earth. We sometimes met revellers on the walk home, and tactical manœuvres were necessary to avoid them. Once a local patriarch remarked, as he saluted us unsteadily, that really the General ought to get the hedges cut back.

My first violent religious impression falls in the early days of our Frimhurst life, when we were taken by an Evangelical cousin to a bazaar at Aldershot for the benefit of soldiers' orphans, got up by Miss Daniel, forerunner of the Y.M.C.A.; after which there was to be an address by Lord Radstock. We had never been to a bazaar before and passionately hated it. Late in the afternoon I remember Miss Daniel saying: 'Now you will hear *something better* than bazaars,' and presently a dislike of Low Church, conceived in contact with our cousin, became loathing under the influence of Lord Radstock's manner, expressions, voice, and puffy, white-maggot-like physique. I am sure he was a good man, but he made us hate religion for the time being.

Another early Aldershot recollection is Mary and me being taken to sing at an R.A. entertainment, when an appropriate variant of my father's usual peroration came out with tremendous emphasis as addressed to a military audience. Our coachman, an ex-Artilleryman, was in a terrible way lest we should not do ourselves justice, exhorting us to hold our heads well up, and not hide our faces with the music. 'Remember, Miss Mary,' he said, 'it's the *hattitude* as does it.' We bore George Taylor's advice in mind, and on musical occasions in later life one could not desire a more gratifying reception than the Colonel's little girls met with.

As a printed contemporary notice lends relief to very trivial incidents, I give an extract from *Sheldrake's Gazette* (still the leading Aldershot journal) which I found among old papers.

On this occasion the Colonel's two fair daughters appeared upon the platform to sing a duet, and the applause with which they were greeted was indescribable. Each possessing a sweet voice, the effect was exceedingly telling,

the duet being so exquisitely rendered that an enthusiastic encore was called for. Mrs. Smyth accompanied her daughters in the first duet, and in the second the younger of the two fair sisters presided at the piano. This was the first appearance of ladies on the platform in this room, and that their noble example may be followed is the earnest wish of all who take delight in these excellent entertainments; for assuredly nothing is more likely to tend to their success than the offer of the services of ladies who possess musical talent, and are willing to contribute to the entertainment of the soldier during the winter months.

Before reading the piece he had selected for Tuesday evening (' The Death of Montrose ') the noble Colonel, addressing his men, said,—and he spoke with an earnestness that must have made itself felt in the breasts of every one of them: ' I read these selections to you, my men, because they treat of noble lives, and in the hope that they may be incentives to you in the path of duty. I wish to impress upon you that it is expected of us at every time, and in every clime, whether amidst frost and snow, or pestilential famine and disease, to endure without murmuring hardships of every kind. Let me also impress upon you strongly that when required to face death we should do so without fear, but in hope of mercy and forgiveness, and be ever ready to lay down our lives for our Queen, our country, and our God.' I can hardly describe the enthusiasm with which these few words were met, and can attribute it to no other cause than the high confidence and esteem placed in their Colonel, and the love of their country which exists in the breast of the British soldier.

This encomium is no great compliment to the 'few words ' themselves, but one mustn't split straws.

Of one personality frequently met with during the Christmas holidays at children's parties I have an ineffaceable recollection, the Conjuror—a round, bright-eyed little old man with a shock of grey curly hair, who never ceased entreating us to watch him closely. ' Now don't take your eyes off me, my little dears,' he would say: ' *it's while I'm a talking to you that I'm a deceiving of you* '—a phrase that

was adopted by the family. At one time he nearly died, and when able to resume business he remarked to my mother, pointing to his fat helpmate: ' When I was bad I used to say to 'er, " You may get another *'usband*, my dear, but you won't get another *conjuror.*" '

For my part, as soon as I realised I should never guess how these tricks are done, conjuring rather exasperated me, my feeling then as now being, what's the fun of not understanding? Or again, why crack your brain about something you know is really quite simple? For which reason I am never tempted by the later works of Mr. Henry James. Montaigne was of the same way of thinking, and says somewhere that when he comes to an obscure paragraph he makes one or two ' charges ' at it, and then, if the meaning still eludes him, throws away that book for good and all.

CHAPTER IX

1867 TO 1872

Not long after our arrival at Frimhurst, Alice was presented and came out. There were five years between her and Mary, and since, as I said, there were four between Nina and me, Mary and I were in a schoolroom group by ourselves. For this reason I can remember nothing about Alice's proceedings, with one momentous exception—her first proposal, or anyhow the first at which we, so to speak, assisted. There was a certain young soldier with very pink cheeks and a strange habit of wearing velveteen coats —an assiduous visitor whose attentions became marked. One day we saw him leaving the house in evident agitation, and when, with the tact of younger sisters, we instantly rushed into the drawing-room, lo! there was Alice, supported by mother, being plied with smelling-salts! In Jane Austen's day this was the correct attitude for a girl of sensibility on tender occasions, and to that epoch Alice belonged by education and temperament; but Mary and I were early samples of the coming generation and poor Alice never heard the last of that touching tableau. She declares to this day it was a figment of our imaginations, but it was not, and I am glad to have seen this sort of thing with my own eyes, for we shall never see it again.

Whether forerunners or not, Mary and I were still considered very quaint children, as in the Sidcup days, and were infuriated by a strange young lady who called to her brother through the window: 'O Lionel, do come in and hear these funny children talk,' whereupon we of course

fell silent, as self-respecting children would. Neither of us was in the least shy, but when in the presence of one of my 'passions,' I was liable, under the stress of emotion, to extraordinary contortions; such as standing on the outside of my feet, swaying to and fro, brushing the palm of one hand violently against the other in mid-air, as if one were flint and the other steel—antics that Mary, who knew the cause, eyed with scornful astonishment.

It is to be hoped, more especially as these Memoirs are pointedly dedicated to people with a sense of humour, that no one will imagine we chronically disapproved of each other or were for ever competing and quarrelling. Like all healthy-minded children we had our little rivalries and ambitions, a large stock of cocksureness as to who was in the right, and . . . both of us had tempers. Hence, though our differences were no longer settled with knives and forks, there were plenty of rows, but as a matter of fact we were devoted to each other, and so closely identified in people's minds that, much to our annoyance, our parents would sometimes say: 'Mary and Ethel, shut the door.' Believers in the saint-like children met with in books, and who probably view their own vanished childhood in the same unreal light, may not be of my opinion, but I hold that no great attachment is possible between young growing things without these clashes of temperament, and that you are all the better friends afterwards. Thus it was at any rate in our case.

It had always been an axiom in the family, that from earliest years Mary had been drawn by me into tomboyish ways that really were foreign to her nature. I think this is probably true; anyhow as time went on, boys who began by being attracted by my independence and proficiency in games, always ended by forsaking me in order to minister to Mary's more feminine helplessness—buckling on her skates for her, or in response to a piteous 'Help me! I'm giddy!' flying to her rescue among the higher branches of the old cherry-tree. I remember various incidents connected with faithless boy-lovers of mine, but think

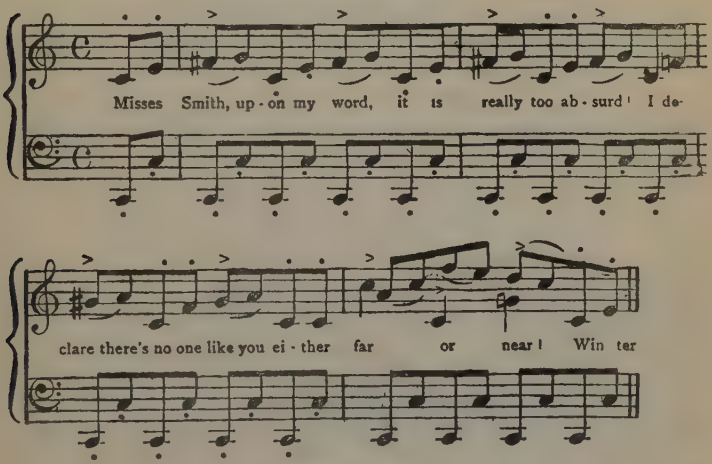
that in all this I was playing a part, doing what I knew was the correct thing. Now and again a very real feeling of mortification may have swept over me as I saw my admirers succumbing to the charms of Mary, but from the first my most ardent sentiments were bestowed on members of my own sex, and the love affairs with boys were but imitative and trashy, I fear.

The other day I came upon a draft of a letter addressed to a very dull Harrow boy who afterwards took Holy Orders. Oddly enough all my admirers became schoolmasters, or clergymen, or both; perhaps I was the one wild adventure of coast-hugging spirits who immediately afterwards reverted to type. This particular lover seems, however, to have reverted prematurely, and the letter began: 'O Willie, Willie! how could you deceive a poor girl as you have me?'—which shows that my style was formed either on Shakespeare or the nursery maid, who under these circumstances use identical language.

Humble as is the mood reflected in this letter, my father and most of the relations rightly considered that I had an overweening opinion of myself; in fact Papa said I reminded him of Lord John Russell, of which notoriously conceited statesman the *Times* remarked that he would be quite willing to take command of the Channel Fleet at a moment's notice. No doubt the parallel was justified, and I may have deserved the plentiful snubbing I got, but no amount of it ever shook my conviction that I was more musical than they had any idea of. For instance my mother and I were once hunting in some music books for a certain composition, but whereas she played the first bar of each piece in her book with one hand, I just gave a glance and turned the page of mine. 'Take care, you'll miss it,' cried she, and I said to myself: 'She doesn't know as much as I!' but didn't tell her so because I loved her—a rare case of abstention from boasting which astonished me myself, and which I cannot help mentioning.

I have said that she lost her beautiful voice long before the usual age, but in the earlier Frimhurst days, when she

was between forty-three and forty-five, she still sang occasionally, and one of her songs, my father's favourite, 'Of what is the old man thinking?' had a charming melody, her perfect phrasing of which struck even me, a child. But the song I liked best—really a duet, only I never heard it in that form—was a certain little masterpiece all on the tonic, dominant, and sub-dominant, (a great test)—full of accent and fun both as to music and words. It was called, I think, 'Mr. and Mrs. Smith,' and illustrated to perfection H. B.'s theory that 'English married life bases on snarling.' Mrs. Smith had apparently expressed a wish to go to Brighton, and the ball opens with her husband's comments on this proposal. I cannot refrain from giving the first four bars and some of the verses, the last three lines of which are always repeated.



(Mr. Smith)

Mrs. Smith, upon my word
You are really too absurd,
I declare there's no one like you either far—or—near!
Winter, Summer, Autumn, Spring,
You're for ever on the wing,
Never quiet for a moment Mrs. Smith—my—dear!

(Mrs. Smith)

O my love, now in your conscience
How can you talk such nonsense!
I declare your little judgment isn't o—ver—clear;
There's a time of year that carries
Ev'ry soul to Rome or Paris,
And I only mentioned Brighton Mr. Smith—my—dear!

. . . . . .

After a stanza or two which I have forgotten. . . .

(Mr. Smith)

Then your bonnets, caps, and curls,
Combs, and trinkets for the girls,
Your Assembly Rooms and boxes on the Pre—mier—tier;
'Pon my life it's very funny,
Not a thought about the money . . .
Where the devil should it come from Mrs. Smith—my—dear?

(Mrs. Smith, *sarcastically*)

And pray where are all your schemes,
All your million-making dreams,
Your subscription men, your Aldermen, your no—ble—peer?
If of all you've let them sack
You ever see a shilling back,
Why I'm very much mistaken Mr. Smith—my—dear!

. . . . . .

I cannot remember Mr. Smith's counter to this—something to the effect that his restless spouse seems to prefer any place to the domestic hearth—but I wish I could convey an idea of the deadly point my mother put into Mrs. Smith's final thrust . . . with just a suspicion of tears at the repetition of the last three lines. , ,

(Mrs. Smith)

I don't ask, Sir, where you roam,
But this I know,—at home
It is very little of you that we see—or—hear!
And where you choose to be
Is a mystery to me . . .
Why the fact is quite notorious, Mr. Smith—my—dear!

The concluding verse is a real duet, both singing at the same time, and all I remember of it is the eminently sensible conclusion they come to in the last line:

So we'd better both be quiet { Mr. / Mrs. } Smith—my—dear!

I would give anything to meet with this extraordinarily English bit of music again—as English as Bishop and Sullivan, harking back far beyond the former, and yet thoroughly Victorian. Can anyone help me?

By this time I had taken to composing chants and hymns, music being connected in my mind, in spite of the Smiths, mainly with religion—a well-known English malady. And to each of these productions the name of a 'passion' was given. Our duets had now become a feature at home dinner parties, Mary having a very pretty voice and a great idea of delivery. One thing I well remember—wondering how I knew by instinct exactly where she, or other singers I accompanied, would be likely to 'go flat' (for of course one interval was as easy to me as another) and what note, emphasised in time, would correct the tendency. In later years this mystery of critical intervals became clear to me.

There was one musical torture of my youth, however, from which no relief could be obtained. Maddened by a reiterated wrong note, or what my friend Lady Ponsonby once called 'foolish basses,' I would cry: 'I can't do this sum if you go on playing G natural; it's G sharp!' And Mary would calmly reply: 'I *prefer* playing G natural,' and go on doing it. I consider both parties in this matter

blameless and no apologies need be offered for either, but I do blame the wretched governesses, who, themselves incapable of distinguishing wrong from right notes, would tell me to mind my own business and get on with my sum.

Now in extreme cases my mother knew very well when wrong notes were being played, but having survived many years of English drawing-room music she bore it with relative equanimity, and the rest of my world were in the same position as our governesses. Realising which I became more and more certain that I was in a different class, musically, to my surroundings, and that knowledge did its slow work in my heart, as subsequent events were to prove.

. . . . . .

In some ways I think we two were precocious children, but on one subject—I speak for myself, not knowing how it was with Mary—I was very innocent. When I was about eleven, one awful day, after overhearing scraps of a conversation, or perhaps enlightened in a flash by a line of poetry, I suddenly gathered that having babies and embracing were mysteriously connected; and despair fell upon me, for shortly before I had, without enthusiasm, allowed a boy I rather hated to kiss me in the rosery! Like every child in a large family I was aware you could not tell for a long time if a baby were on the way or not, and for two or three months I would surreptitiously examine my figure in the glass and fancy the worst. What agonising suspense of after years can compare with that of a child thus tortured, unable to confide in anyone, and wondering as I did, should the dreaded thing happen, whether I would drown myself in the deep water near the lock, or lay my head on the rails,—perhaps in the tunnel, where people would think it had been an accident! It is because the memory of that terror is as fresh to me now as if it had all happened yesterday, that I am sure children ought to be more enlightened on such matters than they are. Not being a mother I fortunately need not bother my head about the best way to do it.

This was of course a case of innocent imagination run riot, but I remember another excess of imagination, in other words one of those lies children tell in order to make themselves important, which, though no harm was done, troubled my conscience for months and months. The son of one of our neighbours was supposed to be courting a pretty visitor (whom by the by he afterwards married), and one day I reported that I had seen him kiss her in the garden—a proceeeding I no longer considered fraught with possible tragedy but merely reprehensible. Every one at home was thrilled with excitement, and presently I would have given my head to confess it was an invention, but could not summon up the requisite moral courage. Such were my sufferings, however, that soon afterwards I registered a vow, if only because romancing is so easy, to adopt a line of strict truthfulness in the future. And that line I have stuck to ever since—possibly with more zeal than discretion.

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I have said that the whole course of my life was determined, little as she realised it, by one of our governesses. When I was twelve a new victim arrived who had studied music at the Leipzig Conservatorium, then in the hey-day of its reputation in England; for the first time I heard classical music and a new world opened up before me. Shortly after, a friend having given me Beethoven's Sonatas, I began studying the easier of these and walked into the new world on my own feet. Thus was my true bent suddenly revealed to me, and I then and there conceived the plan, carried out seven years later, of studying at Leipzig and giving up my life to music. This intention was announced to everyone and of course no one took it seriously, but that troubled me not at all. It seemed to me a dream that I knew would come true in the fulness of time, but I was in no hurry as to the when. Alas, all my life, I have paid for those seven wasted years! I want to make it clear, that this was no mere passing idea such as children entertain and let go again; when I came out I was not exactly faithless but slack about it during a few months, for reasons I

will explain by and by, but the decision was taken and cast in iron once and for all.

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My father's Aldershot command came to an end in 1872. At that time, owing to a block in the promotion list, several old Indian officers of his seniority were given the option of retiring on a handsome pension with the rank of General; and as his family was large, and his next command probably in India, he closed with the offer, sold his Cheshire home, which was no longer in the country, and bought Frimhurst.

It was a sagacious choice of an abiding-place for an old soldier, well within reach of contemporaries still in the Army—and what I think he appreciated still more, old subalterns of his, now some way up the ladder, who simply adored him. On the stretch of heath land outside our very gates, where most sham fights began, passed or ended, his own branch of the service could be watched, dashing up and down the heather hills—the guns at any angle you please—over banks, ditches, and gravel pits; and not being one of those who think everything is going to the dogs since their own time, nothing interested him more than mechanical and other improvements. Last but not least, unless the wind was dead in the wrong direction, you could take Greenwich time from the 9.30 P.M. Aldershot gun. He generally dozed a little over his *Times* after dinner, but at the faintest report would wake up, saying, 'There's the gun!' pull out his watch, and glance at the clock on the chimney-piece (under which it was the most stringent rule of the establishment to put the keys, after locking up the wine or the postbag).

The house was enlarged, the cost exceeding the estimate by a good deal,—we were never allowed to know exactly how much—and a gravel lawn-tennis court was added, all too near a certain unpleasant overflow, so that when the wind was in a certain quarter there was no forgetting his celebrated theory about 'a good open stink.'

Being better off now we kept more horses; fences were set up in 'the little field,' and over these we were

allowed, nay, urged by my father, to lark to our heart's content. Mary was not particularly keen on this amusement, but I remember after she had twice fallen off his insisting on a third attempt, and amid shouted injunctions to ' sit back and give him his head,' she sailed over in safety and was much praised, as indeed she deserved. A more ideal parent as regards encouraging his children to take risks cannot be imagined, and throughout the unending series of carriage accidents for which we gradually became notorious, his first, I had almost written his only, question was: ' Is the horse damaged?'

He now developed an interest in the farmyard, to which the niceties of flower gardening would have been sacrificed but for mother, who, though she appreciated rich cream and new-laid eggs, objected to hens scratching in borders and cows rambling on lawns. There was a certain Jersey cow that gave more milk than any other two cows, but only on condition of leading an untrammeled existence; many a morning at family prayers, the reader being the only person who commanded a view of the rhododendrons, an agitated whisper of ' Boy—cow!' would be addressed by Papa to the backs of the kneeling servants, upon which the page rose and stole away on tiptoe. And presently the Lord's Prayer was punctuated by sounds of admonishment, reinforced with whacks.

That Jersey cow was a character—what in the strange working-class slang of to-day would be called ' chronic.' Even in the depths of winter she rebelled against the cowhouse, and insisted on roaming in deep snow, wrapped up in sacking. One winter she appeared in a new costume, a beautiful Aubusson carpet, by no means worn out but which my mother had wearied of and relegated prematurely to the sheds, where it was appropriated by the cowman—not for domestic use but for the Jersey. The pattern was all sheaves of corn and wreaths of flowers, and years afterwards we learned that the children believed the idea was to persuade the cow it was summer and induce her to yield more milk.

I fancy some of our governesses were scandalised at the vivid interest taken by the whole family in certain incidents of farmyard life. This tender-hearted cowman was a Crimean veteran of middle age, whose snow-white head was accounted for by the sympathetic legend that it had been frozen during the campaign. But as he shared the weakness of most old soldiers of his day, and as the cow-doctor was none other than the patriarch who demanded one Saturday night that the hedges should be cut back, it is not surprising that our cows often died at critical moments in their career. I remember one evening the page rushing in after dinner to say the calf was born and the cow very bad, whereupon all of us except mother, whom nothing short of the house being on fire would drive out of doors at such an hour, flew in a body to the cow-house. The scene was illumined by guttering lanterns held by the two experts, who, swaying backwards and forwards, were solemnly shaking their heads and murmuring in husky duet: 'It is not in Our Hands.' . . . Alas! it had been, and the poor cow paid the penalty. . . . And I remember a less tragic sight that probably would not astonish students of natural history as much as it did us—the baby chickens of a non-domestically minded hen cuddling up in the lower manger against the stable cat, who mothered them jealously for as long as they would let her.

To complete the list of my father's home activities as country gentleman I will only add that on off days he gave much thought to the kitchen garden, and of course insisted on the oldest peas and beans being pulled first—a well-known madness of all green-growers (I coin this word with conviction). But occasionally my mother would upset everything by sailing into the garden and imperiously pointing out certain vegetables, and that night at dinner there would be a minor domestic scene. One feels certain that this is exactly what went on between Adam and Eve after their expulsion from Eden, if not before.

Lastly, as has been said elsewhere, it was now that he threw himself into county work, with an energy and

thoroughness which has remained a tradition in that part of Surrey to this day.

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Before launching into a period in which it is possible to fix dates, I must just mention one illusion of Mary's and mine which it always amuses me to think of—namely, that we were extremely popular with other girls. Many of these we considered dull, silly, or odious, and no doubt took but scant pains to disguise the fact; nevertheless, believing ourselves to be companionable, well-meaning on the whole, and rather brilliant, we felt sure we must be greatly beloved. When therefore, as sometimes happened, some indiscreet boy-friend would blurt out that Amy or Lucy '*simply loathed*' us, we were not only indignant, but beyond measure surprised.

Pleasing illusions of this kind die hard, it would seem, for an old friend has a story against me (which I don't quite believe) that once, when I was well over twenty, she heard me exclaim about another young friend of hers: 'She's *such* a queer girl . . . she doesn't like me!!' Later on one learns that to take the floor continually, and hold it against all comers, does not necessarily endear you to less voluble competitors on the social scene.

CHAPTER X

1872 AND 1873

I HAVE hinted that the behaviour of Mary and myself did not always give satisfaction, one of our habits that roused disapproval being the innocent one of keeping diaries. We made rather a mystery of it, and I suppose that was the crime. At length, goaded on probably by aunts and cousins, the authorities gave a hint that the habit must be dropped, and what was worse, that the diaries might possibly be confiscated. Thereupon we decided to bury them, and I always think our choice of a cemetery was peculiar. Of course we kept rabbits, and inside the rabbit run I had constructed one of my too, too solid tables and a stool or so. Here many pages of the diaries were written, and perhaps that is the reason why one dark night we committed them to earth, coffined in a biscuit box, in that particular place, determined to resist to the death any attempt to make us divulge the spot. We were in grim earnest about it, feeling, I think rightly, that this would be unwarrantable interference with the rights of the individual. Possibly our parents came to some such conclusion themselves or perhaps sense of humour prevailed; anyhow the diaries were left to rot in peace.

One of our elder cousins, Hugo J.'s sister, wrote and dedicated to her godchild Mary such a charming little poem on this incident, that I am delighted to find Mary still possesses it, and give it here.

Oh Mary! Mary! quite contrary!
How does your garden grow?
Written leaves, not rotten leaves
Are beneath that sod, I know.

You've planted the strangest plant, I hear,
You've sown the strangest seed—
Now, will it bloom a fragrant flower
Or will it rise a weed?

Will those pallid leaflets ever shoot
Unfed, uncheered by you?
Or can they grow without a root?
Oh say, what can they do?

O tell me if those leaves will blow
And will the fruit be fair?
And will the Spring's first gentle breath
Awake the spirit there?

Or will the ever-falling rains,
The balmy evening dews
Efface, instead of brightening,
Their well-known inky hues?

. . . .

The summer zephyr could not wake
The life within those leaves,
Nor morning sun, nor noontide ray
Nor breezy dewy eves!

The sunshine of thine eyes alone
Could reach that plant so rare,
Thy hand alone unfold the leaves
And read the record there!

Flowers from their stalk divided
Droop, fall, and fade away . . .
Diaries, from their writers parted
Must they not decay?

Months afterwards we privately exhumed the diaries, but by that time some other craze held us in its grip and the charm was gone. For my part, disgusted by the unsavoury appearance of my heart's records, I threw them on

the fire; and it is to be hoped that we both of us gave up at the same time a habit to which we were secretly addicted, of being ' found ' in becoming attitudes on sofas and in bow-windows.

. . . . . .

Meanwhile the governess question had become a complicated one, owing to the fact that the younger members of the family were growing up and had to be educated too. A supplementary instructress was tried but it was not a success, for No. 1 considered it beneath her dignity to associate with nursery governesses, and No. 2 spent more time in weeping and retailing her grievances to her pupils than in teaching them the three R's. In despair my parents began to wonder whether Mary and I had not better be sent to school.

The idea was not readily entertained, for at that time it was not considered the thing to let your girls associate with Heaven knows whom under a strange roof. As usual, when in difficulties, my mother consulted her neighbour Mrs. Longman, whose husband, head of the great publishing firm, built and lived at Farnborough Hill (since bought by the Empress Eugénie) and whose family consisted, like ours, of six girls and two boys. This friend warmly recommended a school at Putney, kept by an old governess of theirs, which put quite a different complexion on the matter. Also, when approached by my mother, Miss D. thought well to intimate casually that among her pupils were the daughter of a Baronet and the daughters of two Honourables. Thus it came to pass—as we were told because we were so unmanageable, but really because there was nothing else to be done—that we were packed off to school in 1872.

On the day of our departure Bob, who was then about five, remembers us sitting side by side on a sofa in the bow-window, very erect and serious, in long black coats with broad braid, and mauve scarfs tightly tied in a huge bow under our chins, the long ends floating. It was all most solemn, and he felt sorry for us without knowing why.

At that time all we had to show for large expenditure in the schoolroom was a mere smattering of French, German, and the usual subjects, the most valuable part of our education—a part moreover which had nothing to do with governesses—being the knowledge of the Bible Anglicans acquire automatically, and a love of Shakespeare—the last thanks mainly to Aunt Susan, who in her cold way had strong literary proclivities, and a special devotion to Shakespeare which she passed on to Johnny. He it was who first urged me to read 'Julius Cæsar' and kindled a life-long passion which has known no ups and downs. All schoolmistresses begin by addressing a remark of awful affability to new pupils, and Miss D.'s to me was: 'I hear you are quite a Shakespeare scholar!'

My school life is a sort of block-memory; I see few details, but of course 'passions' raged all the time. There were walks in long procession of two and two; once we were led, my heart beating furiously, past the house where I knew Jenny Lind lived. From allusions to her triumphs in old volumes of *Punch*, and my mother's descriptions of her supreme art, she had long been one of my heroines, and if anyone had told me that one day I should become fairly intimate with this striking and terrifying personality I should have gone off my head on the spot. The more usual thing was vague rambles across Putney and Roehampton Commons, and I remember the pang of joy and longing that always shot through me at one particular spot, then unspoiled by villas. It was a plateau-edge where we always turned off to the left homeward—a dip in the road, the yellow of the gravel where it cut through the hill, and a blue distant expanse of happy lands where people walked at their own pace and went home when they felt inclined. Masters ('extras') came from London to teach us music, drawing, astronomy, and chemistry. I remember the chemistry classes best, because of the breathless excitement as to whether the experiments would come off; sometimes they did and sometimes they didn't, but there never was any doubt as to why schoolboys call this

branch of science ' stinks.' The master had one distressing peculiarity, a drop hung for ever from the tip of his red nose; we used to wonder whether constant stooping over jars of smoking chemicals makes noses insentient.

The music master was a black-bearded, spectacled little German Jew, Herr A. S., and all the busts of Pericles and other great men in my ' Smaller History of Greece ' were furnished with spectacles, had their beards inked, and thus became Herr A. S. By this time I undertook the music in our afternoon home services on Sundays as a matter of course, composed, and made the girls learn chants and hymns, which bore the names of adored units in the choir —my old system—and generally imposed myself musically. Hence poor Herr A. S. thought he saw a unique opportunity for spreading his reputation as composer, and ' L'Alouette,' ' Le Rêve ' and all the rest of them, French names being in favour because of the success of ' La Prière d'une Vierge,' were hopefully unpacked. I rather fancy it was part of his contract that parents should have a certain number of these works booked to them at face value. But I wouldn't even look at them—a fact he recalled to me with infinite good humour in after years, when, an old, asthmatic wreck in retirement, he used to struggle up from the country to hear my work performed. And indeed is it likely that one already deep in Schumann, Schubert, and Beethoven would add Herr A. S. to the list?

The whole school, except those whose parents struck at the expense, were taken up to Mr. Kuhe's yearly Grand Benefit Concert; there for the only time in my life I heard Patti, and, strange incomprehensible fact, what struck me most was her coquettish way of trotting on to the platform, followed by a display of ecstatic surprise at the plaudits that lifted the roof—an experience as common to her as the sun rising. The other day, genuinely overwhelmed by her incomparable rendering of ' Voi che sapete ' on the gramophone, it was bitter to reflect I had once heard the real woman and cannot recall the ghost of a thrill. Was it my childish contempt for florid music—she sang some-

thing by Donizetti, I think—combined with insane dislike of affectation even as innocent and ritualistic as hers, or does some spiteful god amuse himself by turning us deaf and stupid for a while? . . . We were also taken to the Royal Academy Exhibition, and again a blank in my memory occurs, to account for which no occult agency need be sought. To the National Gallery we were *not* taken, which sufficiently characterises girls' schools of that period.

On Sundays we were marched to Putney Church, and compared our personal appearance with that of a rival school on the other side of the chancel. I think we were all in love with the cherub-faced high-born curate, less so with another clergyman, who, I fear, took more than a pastoral interest in some of the prettier members of his flock; anyhow we knew Miss D. had reasons for making sure that one of the staff should be present during his religion classes. He prepared me for Confirmation and I cordially disliked him, but the great thing that was to happen during that spring of 1873 dwarfed all thoughts of any imperfections in the agent.

I hope I have shown how full of brightness and interest our lives were; yet looking back and asking myself whether on the whole happiness or unhappiness had predominated in mine, I have no hesitation in answering, unhappiness. How should it be otherwise? If I was violent enough outwardly to be called 'the Stormy Petrel' it was nothing to the violence within. Ambitious, wilful, torn by storms of anger, despair, and love, feeling that somehow I was of different stuff to the boys and girls I associated with, and had that in me that not even my mother, who loved me dearly and knew me so well in some ways, ever suspected, there was no one to help me into the path I afterwards found for myself with so much difficulty. I was merely considered an exceptionally naughty rebellious girl who required snubbing; no one saw anything there that merited encouragement. I had fits of religion, and like all people of a certain temperament had always been prone to in-

coherent, anguished prayer, after which I knew peace for a while; but these moods passed, and back rushed the old stress and misery.

Then came my Confirmation; and when the Bishop laid his hands on me—a solemn moment I remember, strange to say, more vividly than my first Communion—I believed as young people will believe at such times as long as this earth shall endure, that now my troubles were over once and for all. And yet in a book a school friend had just given me I might have found a warning that this could not be hoped for, that if even a small modicum of one's early fervour can be retained for ordinary working use one must be thankful.[1] And of course the inevitable happened, but the spirit of those Confirmation days never seemed to me incomprehensible and impossible to recapture as it does to some. Nor was it, for since then I have been through similar periods; none is quite like the last, but the insweeping sea is always the same,—a sea that lifts and does not drown.

On one point I have never been able to see clearly. My ' Imitation ' is deeply scored in chapters such as the ones on ' Inordinate Affections ' or ' Private Love hindereth most from the Chiefest Good,' and when I came to know Greek art I instantly understood that excess and perfection are enemies; yet on the other hand this world and the million worlds around us live by fire. . . ! There is a mental movement H. B. called ' going back to your top '; if you propound to a child a problem beyond his intelligence, he will stare at you for a moment and quietly go on with his game. After meditating the subject of passion *versus* balance I always go back to my top with a sense of peculiar relief. . . .

In connection with this part of my school life I must mention one absurd incident that assumed for me the proportions of a tragedy at the time. Three days after my Confirmation the most adored of all my school friends, a very religious girl, extremely High Church like myself and with a face like a sheep, met my old aversion Lord Radstock

[1] *Imitation of Christ,* Part iii., Chapter viii.

at a garden party, and a week later became a Plymouth Sister! . . . . Instinctively I felt that this dreadful conversion was not unconnected with the fact that Lord Radstock was probably the first peer she had ever met in her life, and down toppled the idol from her pedestal. I was at heart a little snob myself in those days and may have done her injustice . . . but . . . I fancy not!

On the whole Mary and I agree that we learned a good deal at Miss D.'s, but I still think among the most important things were being taught how to darn stockings, and how to put clean linen back in the drawers, that is at the bottom of the pile—a principle I insisted on when I came to have a house of my own. As for darning, it is more than needlework; it is bridge-building, it is house-building (for thus you lath and plaster a ceiling), it is gardening (for thus you make something grow where there was nothing). In short it has the charm of all jobs that begin with the formula: 'take a hole.' But I never do it if I can help it.

Memories of home-life now assumed a passionate aspect of course, and on this theme we wrote words to a tune then in vogue—a tune so jolly and shapely that I think it must be by Offenbach. This song became a great feature in our repertory, and the last verse, 'to be sung slowly and sadly,' ran:

But soon we shall return
To that horrible Mango Chutnee
We eat with mutton cold
In our school which is at Putney.
Oh dear! Oh dear!
Let's shed a silent tear!

Chorus (*at a cheerful pace*).

But hurrah, hurrah, our lessons are past!
Hurrah, hurrah for freedom at last!
Hurrah, hurrah, though time flies fast
We'll make of it all we can!

Let me say chutnee was not dragged in unlawfully; we really did have it twice a week, and that it happens to rhyme with Putney is a dispensation.

Our school books, many of which I still have, are scored with home souvenirs. Before we were exiled we had made hot friends with a young soldier, Walter Lindsay by name, whose regiment, a very smart one we were glad to think, was under canvas on the Chobham Ridges. He was really a dear fellow, as the fact of his preferring to all other company that of a couple of children proves, and I have a huge Atlas on the blank sheets of which are no fewer than fifteen portraits of our hero as viewed by my adoring eyes. He was very good-looking, but his nose was certainly too long for the canons of perfect beauty . . . and young artists do not mince matters. Years and years after I met him again—still very good-looking and father of one of the most beautiful girls in London—and of course told him about the Atlas, which so delighted him that I promised to do him tracings of some of the portraits. But when I produced them a grave look passed over his face, and I realised with secret amusement that he was upset at his nose having assumed such proportions even in the eyes of a child! . . . Truly vanity is not a feminine monopoly.

At this period Mary and I were much given to writing poetry, and I still possess a collection of my plays and verses. Anything more totally devoid of talent cannot be imagined; there is but little sense of rhythm in the verse, the funny poems are dreadfully arch, and the serious ones insufferably sententious and commonplace. In my case this phase started before I went to school, in an effusion which I overheard a misguided relation say was 'remarkable,' and which celebrated a phenomenon which really *was* remarkable—Northern Lights of unexampled brilliancy. If only as a warning to other young poets with indulgent and uncritical relations, here it is:

The Aurora Borealis

I have seen the bright heavens in many an aspect
When sparkling in starlight and beaming with light,
But I never have seen it so gloriously brilliant
As when the Aurora is shining at night.

I have watched its faint ray growing stronger and stronger,
Until its rich crimson is lighting the sky,
I have watched it grow fainter and fainter each moment,
Until it has faded to darkness on high.

We must think, when we see this great work of our Maker,
What poor feeble creatures we are in His sight,
For who under Heaven could make the Aurora
To shine like the day in the midst of the night? . . .

. . . . . .

It is meant to remind us of God our Creator,
To show us our weakness compared to His might!

(I myself thought this tacking on of two extra lines rather good.)

The poems of the Putney period show some slight improvement; there are a few verses on 'Confirmation' which are really sincere and not unmusical; I expect they were more than directly inspired by 'The Christian Year.' I had not re-met this poem when I wrote about my Confirmation, and am interested to see there is no reference to the Holy Communion, and that the best verse begins:

When the Bishop now is laying
His hands upon us, praying . . .

—the sort of incident which gives a memoir-writer confidence. Most of the other effusions, whether black tragedy, or in comic vein, lampooning our masters and mistresses, are in the cantering metre of the 'Aurora Borealis'; perhaps this was the influence of Byron whom I greatly admired, or possibly it was an inheritance of Bonnemaman and her 'Gipsy King.' But there was one case that evidently nothing but blank verse could meet.

Unrequited Love

(*A Fragment*)

And thus we stake our lives on one great love,
And thus our hopes are shattered when we find
That earthly love hath Summer, and a Spring . .
Alas that Love should have a Winter too! . . .

I staked my all upon the raft of Love
And peacefully it floated down Life's stream.
But then Life's river is a changing stream;
Sometimes 'tis rapid, sometimes slowly winds
Through pastures green, with flowers dipping in
Their blushing faces when the noonday sun
Waxes too strong. Sometimes through mountain gorge
It tears and foams, rending the trees and bushes,
Waking a thousand echoes in the rocks. . .

. . . . . .

My raft was floating onward peaceably—
It struck upon a rock—a crash—it sank!—
O cruel rock! for now my heart is torn
From all it held the dearest upon earth . . .
She cares not for my love . . . and so I mourn
In Solitude!

Sometimes I wonder if, in a future state, what artists look on as their matured masterpieces will strike them as the above 'poems' strike their author to-day.

. . . . . .

This literary phase of ours resulted in one incident more ludicrous even than our own productions. During one summer holidays Fred Longman, a cultured nephew of our neighbour's, lent us a periodical in which was what he, and of course we, considered a wonderful poem. The subject was a priest's love affair and it seemed to us the last word of tragic passion. Mary and I at once copied it out, but somehow or other the matter came to the ears of our elders. Mr. Longman, appealed to as an incontestable authority, pronounced the verdict—I remember his exact words—that the thing was 'revolting in thought and disgusting in expression,' and profuse apologies were tendered for his nephew's indiscretion. Foreseeing that we should be called upon to destroy our copies, we actually spent the whole of a stormy night committing the poem to memory, aided by flashes of lightning which illumined the doomed manuscripts—whether because this seemed the

most suitable illumination, or because we had no candle, I am unable to say. Thus it is possible to summon the first stanza from the shades of oblivion.

I was a priest and I should not love her,
I was a man and my love was hers!
Turn it and turn it from cover to cover,
The book of my soul no more avers
In my deed's defence than this one thing;
That Love held my will in his fierce hot hand,
And swayed it, and shook it, and tore it asunder
As your tropic earthquake tears the land,
As your lightning leaps with his voice of thunder
To smite the trees which were green in Spring,
And grind the spires of granite to sand!

[In those days the possessive pronoun before earthquake and lightning puzzled me; 'why *your*?' I asked myself. And nowadays, having grasped the rhetorical nature of that pronoun, I ask, still more insistently: 'Why *your*?' . . .]

To return to the priest. Passing from generalities to facts, he now tells us that 'oft when the organ did grumble and groan for the puny human fingers that vexed it'—(I thought that bit wonderful) he would invoke 'the forms and faces of women that dwell in the seats whence the poor young angels fell.' Of these he remarks 'a body each had, but Heaven unsexed it,' and needless to say such anæmic visions had no chance against flesh and blood realities like 'my lady with rich warm lips, and love in her face and finger tips, and great grey eyes that looked out from afar, and the great arched neck, made, sure, for caressing' (these must have been the passages Mr. Longman had in mind when he used the term 'disgusting in expression,' for I cannot recall anything more ardent). And so this tragic affair went on, accompanied by 'the moan of the selfish sea, its moan as up to the moon it strove,' until, after a good deal of perfunctory prayer on the beach, the moment came when 'in the small poor hall of her father's

house ' he ' felt and knew that the Fate did come and the Curse did fall.'

I have forgotten a good deal of the middle part, though, as I write, details come back to me that tend to further justify Mr. Longman; but I well remember the last stanzas, in which grave doubts as to the future are expressed, the hero going so far as to ask himself: ' Where Love did reign shall Despair and Hate blacken us both for the Hell below?' Undaunted, however, by this distressing possibility, his last words are pitched in an heroic key to which Mary and I did ample justice, chanting out the final couplet in loud exultant *unisono*:

> Yet I feel no fears for the vengeful years,
> But lift up my face to defy them all!

When I reflect how often the thought of this whole incident has made me laugh, I bless the mental effort that engraved a few hundred lines of inflated rubbish into the brains of two silly schoolgirls.

CHAPTER XI

1873 TO 1875

In the course of periodical returns to the scene of our past schoolroom activities, one thing impressed itself strongly on our minds. We had always been given to understand that the everlasting rumpusses and governess crises were owing to our peculiar temperaments and general unmanageableness; but it was obvious that exactly the same thing was going on now, also that the class of instructress had not changed since our day. But though we had had some queer specimens to deal with, Mary and I never achieved anything to compete with the Queen of the children's series—a lady who wore stockings woven in black and white rings, and remarked it would be madness for anyone whose legs were short of perfect symmetry to venture on that pattern. 'I may tell you,' she added, 'that when I was young, gentlemen used to ask me to walk up ladders so that they might look at my ankles.' The bewitching ankles were still exhibited to any large four-legged animal she might meet, before whom, catching up her petticoats, she would fly like the wind. On such occasions she was not above negotiation, a fact taken advantage of by her pupils, who would lead her innocently through a field in which, as they knew, one or other of the horses had been turned out. Paddy had a way of galloping after passers-by with his mouth wide open, which, though meant in the friendliest spirit, had such an effect on Miss Gobell's nerves that she would bribe them with the promise of a half-holiday to take her home

by some other route. In fact, our successors were exactly the same heartless young brutes that we had been ourselves.

. . . . . .

Judging by its repercussion in the schoolroom, I think the drama must have been on the up-grade in those days; certainly the children's performances struck me as more vivid and realistic than ours ever were. I well recall one particular charade acted on the landing outside the schoolroom. For the whole word a huge target was to be displayed, and it was the province of a little neighbour of ours (a child of excessive temperament), armed with a rifle, cap and all complete, to fire home the point. When the time came, however, overpowered by excitement she forgot to fire, and running amuck amongst the audience prodded right and left with her weapon, screaming 'Bull's-eye! bull's-eye!' The success of this unexpected *finale* may be imagined, but remembering what I have gone through myself on the operatic scene, owing to points of stage-management being missed or bungled, I warmly sympathise with the fury of Miss Grace Pain's fellow actors.

I remember, too, one bit of dialogue that brought the house down, for the whole establishment, especially the men servants, heard it at least once a week in real life.

SCENE: *The Drawing Room*

PAPA. Where are the keys?

MAMA. Under the clock.

PAPA. They're *not* under the clock.

MAMA. But they must be; I put them there myself.

PAPA. I tell you they're not there. When did you have them last?

MAMA. After luncheon of course, when Violet locked up the wine. It was *bitterly* cold in the dining-room because you always *will* tell David not to pile up the coals, and I remember going *straight* to the fireplace after lunch, and putting the keys under the clock before I settled down *to try and get warm again*——

PAPA. Well then someone has taken them away and not put them back. If people go meddling with the keys and don't put them back, how the devil——(*fumbles in his trouser pockets*). Why, bless my soul! I had them in my pocket all the time!

I may add that the children got up these things by themselves, the help of their elders being neither asked for nor required.

. . . . . .

During these short respites from Putney, Mary and I pursued pleasure with the avidity of people who know there is a term set to it, and I am reminded that our neighbours, whose houses were a fortune to us in holiday time, have not yet been spoken of as fully as they deserve.

Like the Longmans, most of them came under the usual heading—peaceful, normal people, nations without a history; but there were certain others with whom I rather wonder we were allowed to associate so freely. I suppose our parents had acquired with years an easy-going, take-things-as-you-find-them philosophy, such as befits people not very well off, who have large families keen on enjoying themselves.

One neighbouring establishment was really fantastic; an immensely fat, clever, lady of the house, rumoured to have been a nursery governess in early youth; a husband, generally absent on journeys connected with some unspecified business, who was said to be addicted to drink; and an aged father stowed away in an annex, who was taken by my father, on the occasion of a first visit, to be the gardener, and sworn at for not opening a gate quick enough. There were many children, including two schoolboys, in love with Mary and me respectively (though needless to say Mary eventually mopped up both) and a daughter, of an age to be 'such a nice friend for Alice.' Further there was a Mr. Y—, 'our dear old friend Y.,' whose resemblance to one of the boys was so remarkable as to dumbfounder casual callers. But above all there was a hand-

some old peer in Holy Orders, with a flowing grey beard and the grand manner, who may be said to have constituted a regular part of this curious household. Charitable neighbours would underline the fact that his invalid wife was also in the house, but as she was kept hidden in a side wing and seldom if ever seen, whereas he and his hostess drove out together daily, bulging right and left over the sides of a tiny Victoria, scandal continued to simmer. At some Christmas festivity to which Johnny and Maunsell B— were invited, the rarely present master of the house was reported to have burst into tears and invited anyone who dared breathe a word against his dear wife to come out on to the lawn and fight him. He was gently conducted to his bedroom by the peer, and everyone tacitly agreed to go on as if nothing had happened. We frequently played mixed cricket with the family, and it was pointed out that the rector, who liked a glass of good port, always ate his Sunday dinner at that hospitable board.

Another distant neighbour was a well-known old Whig, supposed to have stood in his youth for the figure of ' Barney Newcome '; but that I cannot believe, for though an egoist and a terrible snob, he had qualities that Barney had not, being witty, well-read, kindly, and what my father called rather an old rip. With his fluffy white hair and coal-black eyebrows, his passionate love of poetry, his eighteenth-century nonchalance and cynicism, his extreme good nature and worldliness, he was even then a figure belonging to the past. Statesmen and members of the great world would now and again pass the week-end with him, and knowing that the best receipt for keeping young is to mingle with youth, he would be at some trouble to secure the presence of neighbouring young girls.

The subsequent happenings were standardised; he would entice you into the library to look at the bindings of some new books; and then an arm would steal round your waist, and various pinchings and squeezings, graduated according to the receptivity of his companion, had to be endured. Even the most recalcitrant, such as I, were

begged to 'give an old man a kiss,' and it is strange he did not guess with what repulsion one met those old, cold lips. What could we do? He had tried his best to give us a good time, and we felt this was the only return we could make; but it was extremely horrible, and I often wonder how far he went with more facile subjects than myself. Once he gave me a sovereign,—not, be it remarked, for favours received—and when I hesitated to accept it he said: 'My dear, take an old man's advice, never refuse a good offer.' I thought the advice sound and have followed it ever since. It appears that when his hour struck, this old heathen made a beautiful and well-mannered end, apologising to his nurse, like Charles II, for being such an unconscionable time dying.

Now my parents knew all about these two households but never dreamed of preventing our going there. I cannot say how entirely I approve this tacit recognition of the truth that it takes all sorts to make a world; and as in the country you can't pick and choose, better let your children find their own way about. If I had a family of my own I would bring them up on the same lines.

. . . . . .

In the country, what are nominally children's parties are often besprinkled with grown-ups, and if only for that reason Mary and I were not above attending many such in our Christmas holidays. Mary was now an extremely pretty girl with a natural taste for flirtation, and the eternal trouble was that, being two years older than I, she had a better chance—even if other things were equal, which they were not—of securing grown-up partners, the secret ambition of every child in the room. As a matter of fact they swarmed round her. Once at a dance at the Longmans, I, the surefooted one, the athlete of the family, suffered the anguish and humiliation of slipping up on the parquet floor, and coming down on all fours beside my partner (only a boy of course) whose head nearly cracked the boards. Later on, Mary, who was eating an ice, and being ministered

to by a nephew of Mrs. Longman's, Edward Bray (a very good-looking Cambridge man, with romantic grey eyes) said to me airily over her shoulder: 'You must have knocked at least fifty off your price.' If ever murder was in anyone's heart it was in mine at that moment!

I had recently performed a rather bold feat. There was a big drain in our grounds, about two feet in diameter, that carried off the rainwater from the wood into the canal, and the season being dry, I had entered this drain from the canal side and crawled right through it—some thirty yards perhaps—pushing the unwilling dog in front of me as a precaution against mephitic gases, and bribing Violet with 4d. to follow close in my wake. One day when I was bragging, as not infrequently happened, of my pluck, Mary casually remarked that she had told Edward Bray about it, and all he said was: 'Pah! how disgusting!' . . . Slowly I realised he had mistaken the nature of the drain! . . . This was the sort of thing that would make me murmur to myself in the silent watches of the night: 'I wish I was dead—I wish I was dead!' . . .

Despite this grey-eyed Adonis and many other fervent admirers, Mary was not unmindful of earlier ties. Maunsell B., still Johnny's great friend, now considered himself seriously, though secretly, engaged to her—much to the agitation of his mother, who saw what was going on, and though a great friend of our mother's, had no intention of letting her darling and only son marry a girl without money. Meanwhile Mrs. B. was far away, and Mary on the sofa beside him, where they would sit in the dusk and ask for soft music. Being, as I said, favourable to love affairs in general, I met their views, and am glad to believe gave satisfaction, the first movement of the 'Moonlight Sonata' being considered especially sustaining to the emotions. Whoever else did not appreciate my music, those two certainly did.

During one of our summer holidays I myself was favoured for the first time with amatory speeches from a grown-up,

though in rather a public manner, for they were bawled from the branches of a big apple-tree whereon grew the ruddiest apples I ever saw, and which was no distance from the dining-room windows. The climber, one Colonel McIvor, was a total stranger to all of us except my mother, into whose life he had leaped with one chivalrous bound, dragging her, so to speak, from beneath the wheels of a Paris omnibus. One can imagine how this romantic incident appealed to her imagination, how he was pressed to look us up in England, and arrived one day, just in time for luncheon, on a short visit.

He described himself as a ' real soldier of fortune, one who has fought for lost causes all over the world,' and had with him a collection of ' grandeurs,' in the shape of foreign orders, which my father wholly failed to identify. If the publicity of his declaration, which took place soon after luncheon, was rather disconcerting, I supposed these were open-hearted ways acquired under warmer skies than ours and was flattered on the whole. But as the day went on his tales of adventure by field and flood became more and more incoherent, so much so that after dinner a strong hint was given him by my father to leave next morning by an early train, which he did. We afterwards found out he had proposed both to Alice and Mary, and according to her account had made improper advances to the children's governess; so I ceased boasting of my conquest.

Colonel McIvor was far from being our only improvised visitor, for my mother, bored with English humdrumness and attracted by all things foreign, would sometimes catch at very queer straws that floated past her in Homburg or Wildbad waters. For instance there was a certain Madame de S., a Belgian, who I dimly felt, even then, after a certain conversation, was not quite in her place in the bosom of an English family; she also was more or less bundled out of the house. Cultivated, well-dressed, with perfect manners, I have sometimes wondered since whether she was perhaps a White Slave agent.

. . . . . .

At length came a day to which I had always looked forward with dread; Mary, who was now of an age to come out, left Miss D.'s for ever. I was miserable without her, and grateful for being allowed eventually to leave school before my own time was up, poor Nina being sent to work off the pre-paid terms in my place. Once home I made mother give me lessons in Italian, which delighted us both, for she was a capital teacher; also I went in for a Cambridge Local Examination and was plucked owing to grievous incapacity for doing sums. Johnny, who had been kind and interested, was really distressed at my failure, but cousin Hugo wrote a mock consolatory letter about my now being entitled to write M.A. after my name, that is Mulled in Arithmetic—a joke I didn't think at all funny.

It was in the summer of 1875—a summer that in any case was to rob her of her favourite daughter—that the great sorrow of my mother's life happened. Alice had been engaged for some time to a young Scotsman, Harry Davidson, and the couple were waiting for an impending improvement in his prospects, when Mary, who had been out but a short time, also became engaged,—not to Maunsell B. but to Charlie Hunter, brother of a school friend of hers. There was to be a joint wedding in July, and the invitations, of which I had mercifully kept a list, had been sent out, when it became evident that Johnny's slow martyrdom, endured by him with marvellous fortitude and sweetness, was coming to an end. For a fortnight he had suffered from terrible headaches, as usual making no complaint, and one night at dessert, taking up a biscuit, he said: 'How queer, I can't read the letters on this biscuit.' He then sank back, as we thought fainting, but a tumour on the brain had burst, and he became unconscious by slow degrees, his last conscious words being: 'Don't let this illness of mine stop the girls' weddings.'

We used to take it in turn to watch nightly beside his bed, and when relieved spent the rest of the night on a sofa

in the Hall close by, so as to be ready if needed. One night, after my watch was over, I stumbled and fell, and there I was found when the housemaid came in the morning to open the shutters, asleep on the floor . . . as I had fallen. Such is the sleep hunger of youth. There had just been time to cancel the invitations, but as it seemed that he might linger for some time yet, the marriages took place one morning at Frimley Church, none of the family but myself being present. The bridegrooms went back to London from the church door, and a few days afterwards Johnny died. That afternoon the children had been sent to a kind neighbour, and Nelly says that on their return mother met them at the front door to tell them he was dead, tears streaming down her face yet trying to smile—a picture of grief that has remained with them ever since.

This was my first acquaintance with death, and the sight of that strange unfamiliar face impressed me terribly and painfully. The day after the funeral the married couples departed, and I became the eldest at home.

CHAPTER XII

1875 AND 1876

ALL this time, whether at home or at school, the main determination of my life, though sometimes obscured, had never wavered; it was like a *basso ostinato*, which, as subsequent counterpoint studies showed me, will sometimes be shifted to a less obvious position in the midst of other voices and seem to the eye of ignorance to have vanished. I certainly trifled with other ideas, such as marriage, travel, becoming a Roman Catholic, or even a nun. This last seems fantastic now, but after my Confirmation I held, as I do still, only in quite another sense, that only one thing matters, one's relation to God. And if so, how about obedience to parents? My father would never let me go abroad willingly, if only for reasons of economy, and I quite grasped that making an allowance to a married daughter, whose future is no longer your business, is quite another thing to financing a maiden's sterile whims. In his mind's eye he would see me, no doubt, returned on his hands a failure—to knock too late at doors in the marriage market; meanwhile his income was none too large to keep the home going. After all, in the religious life there would be scope for limitless passion—a belief that I imagine induces many conversions—and Thomas à Kempis had given me a foretaste of the ecstasy of renunciation. In one of these moods I set to music and dedicated to a latest 'passion,' a very religious woman whose name was Louisa Lady Sitwell, a long piece of sacred poetry. I wish I could look at that MS. now, but no doubt it went

into her wastepaper basket more than forty years ago, and now she is dead.

A less sympathetic phase was Social Ambition. I had read memoirs about Lady So-and-So governing the world from her political salon, and used to spend hours studying the Peerage and settling which Duke's eldest son was to give me the position I was so well fitted to adorn. It became a mania for the time, and as we knew no Dukes and had no footing whatever in the great world, implied, but for its piteous snobbishness, a great amount of imaginative energy. I think it must have been in a departing spasm of that craze that, in answer to 'What is your greatest desire?' I wrote in someone's Confession Book 'To be made a Peeress in my own Right Because of Music!' Of course this matrimonial scheming was really a sort of game, like taking a Continental Bradshaw and Atlas and planning journeys round the world; but I don't think it was a nice game, and nothing but a firm intention to speak the whole truth and nothing but the truth in these pages makes me record the Social Ambition phase.

The point is that these temporary crazes blinked into sight to vanish again, and back came the *basso ostinato* more *ostinato* than ever—as I would take pains, by some casual remark, to let my father know; whereupon he would angrily rustle his *Times* and mutter something about 'damned nonsense!' As for my mother, though she was by way of backing him up, I thought she was secretly on my side.

I always count the arrival of that governess who played classical music to me when I was twelve as the first milestone on my road; suddenly, when I was least looking for anything dramatic, the second milestone loomed into vision—to my great excitement we learned that the composer of 'Jerusalem the Golden,' a Mr. Ewing, in the Army Service Corps, who had married one of the Gattys, in fact 'Aunt Judy' herself, was stationed at Aldershot! Even my father, who hadn't an ounce of music in his compo-

sition, may have been moved by the news, for that hymn tune, in which there is a sort of groping ecstasy confined in 'Ancient and Modern' fetters, was considered almost as integral a part of the Church Service as one of the Collects. For my part I took it on trust that at last I was to meet, not a poor musical hack like Herr A. S., but a real musician. And I was right, besides which Mr. Ewing turned out to be one of the most delightful, original, and whimsical personalities in the world.

Mrs. Ewing and my mother were attracted to each other at once and eventually became great friends. Meanwhile she took the whole adoring family to her heart, bade us call her 'Aunt Judy,' wrote us all the most delightful letters, and it is a great source of pride to us that the Fair and donkey-riding incidents in her delightful story 'Jackanapes' were suggested by Bob's adventures at our own Frimley Fair. Her lustre was slightly dimmed by a tendency to enjoy bad health; I think she really was not strong, but as her father once exclaimed, according to his son-in-law: 'Dear Juliana is always *better*, *thank you*, but never *quite well*.' I found a packet of charming letters of hers to mother, written in the most beautiful hand imaginable, which are half spoiled by constant references to her poor back, her wretched head, the air-cushions people lent her, the number of hours spent on the sofa after each journey, and so on.

She was devoted to the other sex, more especially to officers in the Royal Engineers, then supposed to have the monopoly of brains in the British Army, and had discreet, semi-intellectual and wholly blameless flirtations with two or three of these at a time. I did not quite approve of this—possibly from jealousy, for needless to say she at once became the ruling 'passion.' As for her husband, he of course demanded to hear me play and be shown my compositions, after which he proclaimed to our little world that I was a born musician and must at once be educated.

My father was furious; he personally disliked my new friend, as he did all people not true to the English type,

and foresaw that the Leipzig idea would now be endorsed warmly by one who knew. The last straw was when Mr. Ewing proposed that he himself should begin by teaching me harmony; but on this point my mother, urged on by Aunt Judy, who had great respect for her husband's judgment, came over definitely into my camp. So it was settled that twice a week I was to drive myself over to Aldershot and submit my exercises to his inspection.

These expeditions were the delight of my life. The Ewings lived in one of the wooden huts of which in those days the whole camp, with the exception of the barracks, was constituted. They were stifling in summer and bitterly cold in winter, but full of charm. Some had gardens, and luckily the Ewings' was one of these, for both were gardeners and dog lovers. I always brought her flowers from Frimhurst, picking with my own hand those she loved best, and generally laid siege to her heart. At one moment I must have apologised for 'gush'—for in one of her letters she writes: 'One word, my dear child, about "gush." I think a habit of gush, like a habit of pious talk, without being necessarily absolutely insincere *is* very objectionable and both make me feel awkward to the last degree. But few people are weaker than I am as regards the luxury of being loved, and *pace* the physiologists and psychologists, I like a little divine fire both in affairs of the heart and of the soul.' Well; she got it as far as I was concerned, but though she delighted in, and had positive genius for young people, I fancy my ardent devotion gratified her less than the respectful homage of the R.E.'s.

I used to arrive at 11 and have harmony instruction till luncheon; besides this my teacher analysed my compositions, and I felt how capital his criticism was, and how pithily expressed. His real instrument was the organ, but with fingers ill-adapted to piano playing, aided by a very harsh cracked voice, he banged and bellowed his way through the scores of 'Lohengrin' and the 'Flying Dutchman,' and otherwise introduced me to Wagner. And very definitely I remember that Beethoven appealed to me more

than Wagner or anyone else; nevertheless I was bitten by the operatic form of Art—a taste that was to be squashed for the time in Leipzig later on—and wrote in yet another Confession Book that my ' greatest desire ' was to have an opera of mine played in Germany before I was forty—an ambition fated to be realised. I still have, and really educated myself on, a copy of Berlioz' orchestration Mr. Ewing gave me; it is full of characteristic marginal notes and ejaculations by the giver, and is a book I often look into from sheer delight in its style.

After luncheon Mrs. Ewing would good-naturedly correct and comment on the English of little articles I wrote for some obscure Parish Magazine, declaring she could turn me into a writer by and by; but I much preferred playing with the dogs and talking to their owners while they gardened.

Meanwhile my father's dislike of ' that fellow,' as he called him, became fanatical. With all his geniality he could be extremely forbidding in manner to people he disapproved of, and had a way of looking at them without seeing them, his moustache raised in a slight snarl, that was worse than deliberate rudeness. The sight of even a civilian untidy about the hair, necktie, and feet, irritated him, and . . . Mr. Ewing was an officer! Fortunately he never saw him in uniform, for difficult as it is to achieve, my friend managed to look even more slovenly in uniform than in plain clothes.

But the worst was Papa's persistent misreading of his moral character. He must have known that bad digestions often cause red noses, but in this case it was ascribed to Scotch whiskey; and, most infuriating of all, artists being in his opinion ' loose fish,' he put his own construction on my mentor's sentiment for me, which, though very warm and keen, was devoid of the slightest trace of lovemaking. Nor were matters improved by his learning from innocent Aunt Judy herself that her husband was a successful mesmerist—a talent cultivated exclusively, I fancy, in the interest of his wife's ailments, but one can imagine how

its possession endeared him to the father of an impressionable daughter! Knowing nothing whatever about what goes on in an artist's soul, he had no satisfactory clue to the ardour of our alliance, besides which, as I noticed once or twice in after life, unable to sway me himself, he resented my being under the influence of any other man. In short nothing but his reverence for Aunt Judy and her own unfailing tact and charm staved off disaster for the time being.

But it came at last! I have always had a bad habit of strewing my room with correspondence, and one of Papa's amiable weaknesses was a tendency, as my mother put it, to 'go poking about one's writing table.' On one of these occasions he found a certain letter from Mr. Ewing[1] —a charming one, but hardly pleasant reading for parents and guardians! The result was such a terrific storm that the harmony lessons, which in any case were running to a close, the Ewings being under orders to leave Aldershot shortly, came to an abrupt end.

My chief gain in this companionship was of course the immense quickening of my musical life generally, and the comfort of at last feeling 'the breath of kindred plumes about my feet.' I always think of my first musician friend with amusement, tenderness, and also great sadness, for if ever nature fashioned an artist it was this man, condemned by fate to live and die a drudge in the Army Service Corps.

. . . . . .

It was during the Ewing epoch that, invited to stay with the O'H.'s, I paid a first, and certainly memorable visit to Ireland. My host, more amazing than ever, was evidently considered a character even in his own country, but what I chiefly remember is riding a good deal with his daughter, who, as we know, had 'a prettier seat on horseback than any girl in Ireland.' As a matter of fact she had a beautiful figure, which swayed easily to the canter

[1] Appendix I (*d*), p. 152, No. 9.

of a thoroughbred *that was never allowed to trot*; and as I scornfully wrote home, under these circumstances it is not difficult to present a graceful appearance in the saddle! I even advanced with great caution some such theory to her father, who replied with lightning rapidity that no woman ever born *could* trot, and that he would shoot any female belonging to him who made that sort of Judy of herself.

His gentle wife was of the opinion that if I raised my little finger I could make an excellent match out there with a certain young squire, adding: 'You must remember my dear, your poor father has still got four girls on his hands'—a remark I rather resented from the mother of one, for in those spacious days the Psalmist's view of the full quiver obtained, and we were proud of our large family. I replied I was not going to marry, having other views. This renders still more surprising the adventure that befell me on my homeward journey.

On the way out I had been chaperoned across the water by a delightful, exceedingly Irish friend of ours, wife of the great soldier who afterwards became Field-Marshal Sir Evelyn Wood, and was to rejoin her at the house of her brother-in-law, Lord Fitzgerald, at Bray. There I met a young barrister, Mr. William Wilde, with whom I played tennis, and also discussed poetry, the arts, and more particularly philosophy, in remoter parts of the garden. I saw at once he was very clever, and after dinner found he was so musical as actually to put ends of his own to Chopin's Etudes, for which, later on, I might have chopped off his fingers with the lid of the piano; but I then thought it quite wonderful and was glad to find this young man, of whom that great lawyer my host thought highly, was going to England next day in our boat.

We boarded her after dinner, and Willie Wilde, as they all called him, pointed out to me a tall figure clad in dark blue, leaning over the bulwarks and gazing seaward, as 'my brother the poet.' It was the great Oscar, who was at once introduced, and on whom it afterwards appeared,

according to his brother, I had the good fortune to make a favourable impression. But as he was as yet unknown outside Oxford the fact left me unthrilled.

The night was glorious, a full moon and no wind, and I was surprised that Mrs. Wood at once retired to her cabin, for on the outward journey the sea had been like a mill-pond and I thought the Irish Channel a much maligned piece of water. Willie Wilde produced rugs and he and I sat on deck discussing . . . Auguste Comte! Presently I began to dislike the way the mast moved slowly to and fro across the face of the moon, and must have made some remark to that effect, for my companion flew off to fetch some brandy which he said would put everything right. The next moment I was staggering on his arm to the ladies' cabin, and before the stewardess could intervene, to quote our old friend the enamoured priest, 'the Fate did come and the Curse did fall.' Willie Wilde retired hurriedly, but I was past caring who had seen what.

The next thing I remember is the train at Holyhead and a long carriage with berths for men at one end and for women at the other, between the two a sort of loose box with one seat in it like a small guard's van. Mrs. Wood, the most easy-going chaperone I ever met, and who herself had been very sea-sick all night, vanished into the ladies' territory, while Willie Wilde and I ensconced ourselves in the loose box, he sitting on a Huntley and Palmer's biscuit-tin at my feet. And there, in spite of what had happened on the boat, he seized my hand and began an impassioned declaration, in the middle of which the biscuit-tin collapsed. This mishap, which surely would have thrown an Englishman out of his stride, he passed over with some remark I have forgotten, though not its Irish gaiety, and resumed his tale of passion; and before the train steamed into Euston I was engaged to a man I was no more in love with than I was with the engine-driver!

At Euston we were met by Major Wood, who adored his wife, and were hustled across to the Hotel, my lover

being of course of the party. Trains were few and far between in those days, so we decided to tidy up and stay there for some hours before proceeding to Waterloo, it being understood that the Woods had letters to look through and momentous matters concerning a new appointment to discuss. They breakfasted in their own room and we two in the Coffee Room, and when I ran upstairs to ask if I might go off with Willie Wilde to see some old houses (really to buy a ring) impatient voices from behind the locked door answered in duet: 'Yes, yes, go by all means.' Finally I arrived at Frimhurst with a gold band ending in two clasped hands on whichever was the correct finger, and for once wearing gloves, my *fiancé* having requested that the affair be kept secret for the present.

On reflection I found this did not meet my views; averse to secrecy at all times, where was the fun of pulling off an engagement before you are out if no one is to be any the wiser? And then . . . the love letters began to arrive! Now although to propose to a girl five hours after you have seen her being sea-sick is a proof, as I said to myself, of true love, and though to go on proposing after your seat has given way beneath you argues not only passion but sense of humour, undefeatedness, and other admirable qualities, the fact remains that I had accepted this young man from flattered vanity, light-heartedness, adventurousness, anything you please except love. Consequently the letters, which I have since re-read, and which are really very like the genuine thing, rapidly put me off; nor did I like his gentle but continued insistence on the article of silence. In short, before three weeks were over, probably to his secret relief, I had broken off the engagement, adding that I would like to keep the ring as a souvenir! And keep it I did, until a year or two afterwards, when I lost it while separating two dogs who were fighting in deep snow in the heather. Thus ended my first and last engagement, the hero of which I never saw again—a pity, for they say he became even a better talker than his brother.

. . . . . .

Soon after this adventure, the Ewings having meanwhile left Aldershot, I came out, but cannot remember what my then frame of mind was. I had never dreamed of putting through my musical plans till I should be really grown up—that would have been too unreasonable—nor, as I said, did there seem any need for special hurry. So I suppose I thought it well to take a look at the world of real balls and other festivities for which I was now qualified.

On the whole it did not come up to expectations. I loved, and still love, that soundest form of entertainment, dining out; not only from greediness and pleasant curiosity as to what you are about to receive, but because of the mingling of old and young, the talk and laughter, and the gradual warming up of the atmosphere under the influence of good cheer. After dinner I was always asked to sing at once, and as I took care that no one else should get at the piano the musical torture was eliminated.

But the balls! . . . oh, the long drives in a tight white satin bodice, and the entreaties to sit still and not crumple your skirt! My mother always said, too, that towards the middle of the evening my head arrangements suggested a Bacchante or a Cherokee Chief, and would waylay me in corridors and tea rooms, with hairpins plucked from her own head—as a mother bird in the interests of her offspring tears feathers from her breast. Little gratitude and much impatience was her reward. But the dancing itself was the greatest trial. I loved dancing with a delirious 'I wish I could die' passion, especially when the music appealed to me—and just then a man who called himself 'Waldteufel,' no doubt an Austrian, was writing beautiful waltzes—but alas! only one in ten partners had any notion of time, and what made it worse, the nine were always behind, never before the beat. Then it was that I would hear a pretentious, fraudulent, utterly idiotic phrase which I hope is no longer current in ball-rooms: 'I generally dance half-time' (!) Sometimes I would firmly seize smaller, lighter partners by the scruff of the neck, so to speak,

and whirl them along in the way they should go, but I saw they were not enjoying themselves, and oddly enough I wanted these wretches to like dancing with me.

Another thing: years had not yet purged me of snobbishness, and I noticed that the 'smart' young men, being I suppose above such considerations, were the worst time-keepers of all; so that if I did not wish to be driven frantic I must dance with the cads. And on my way home my father would suddenly ask from his corner of the carriage: 'Who was that nästy looking fellow you were däncing with so much?' (He always pronounced his a's in north-country fashion, as in the word 'cap,' which made the adjective still more damaging.) Since then I have come to the conclusion that the best sort of Englishmen we breed nowadays, however it may have been in Shakespeare's time, is 'the man that hath not music in his soul,' or indeed artistic proclivities of any kind. There are exceptions of course, such as my dear Mr. Ewing and others I could name, but I fear the rule holds good.

Nor were these the only drawbacks; if I went to a ball it was to dance, and for no other reason, but I soon found out this is a very incomplete theory of balls. Being a self-sufficing person, who didn't want to cling or be clung to except in the way of dancing, what was I doing in this ante-chamber of matrimony, the ball-room? It was the old trouble cropping up again of knowing that between my world and me a gulf was fixed, that I was a wolf in sheep's clothing, in fact a fraud. Talent for flirtation I had none—that wants another temperament, not passionate but either light or sensual—and my attempts were amateurish and half-hearted, like the childish love-affairs with schoolboys. Then too there was the humiliating infuriating idea, that if I was 'nice' to a man he would think I wanted to marry him! Notwithstanding these disabilities, being young and not ugly I did pull off one or two little flirtations, or rather had an admirer here and there whom I fear I encouraged with a view to starting a 'proposal list.' But nothing much resulted.

There was, however, one passing moment of sentimental weakness, and consequent unfaithfulness to my big purpose, which must be recorded. I had a friend, not a 'passion' for once but a clever well-read woman, whose brother I fancied myself in love with. I mention her, because on one or two other occasions I had the same illusion respecting near relations of women friends and explain it thus: the sun I revolved round illumined another body which, in defiance of such astronomical knowledge as I possessed, was taken for another fiery globe instead of merely a dead moon. It is not fair however to speak thus of my young man as I thought him then, for besides being extraordinarily good-looking in the style I most admired—fair with blue eyes—he was anything but a fool, and one of the smartest officers in a celebrated cavalry regiment.

Whether he did, or did not, deliberately trifle with my young affections I cannot say, but when one day at a ball at East Horsley Towers he asked me to come into the conservatory as he had something to tell me before his regiment left Aldershot, I had no doubt as to what was coming, and if he had proposed to me think I should have accepted him, though the affair would certainly have ended as did the bogus engagement to Willie Wilde. What happened however was, that he took from his breast-pocket the likeness of a perfectly lovely girl to whom he said he was going to propose next week! . . . This was rather a shock, but I kept a stiff upper lip and wished him luck. If I was unhappy about it, all I can say is, it has left no trace in my memory. He married the girl, had a most miserable and tragic life with her, and afterwards was supposed to have shot himself by accident on a big-game expedition, —but no one really believed it was an accident.

This ghost of a love affair was my last glance back from the plough, and the fight for freedom was soon to begin in grim earnest.

CHAPTER XIII

1876 AND 1877

In spite of these social perturbations, for I won't quite call them pleasures, music ran her course more or less fitfully. One day I went with the Ewings to a Wagner concert, and was introduced to her brother, Alfred Scott Gatty, the successful song-writer, who, knowing his brother-in-law's soaring spirit, entreated me above all things *not to aim high*; ' it's not the slightest use ' he added, and I rather think he was speaking seriously. Wagner, who was almost unknown in England, had rashly contracted for a series of concerts conducted by himself, which I afterwards heard were a failure financially. My party were all hard up, and we sat so far away from the platform that all I saw was an undersized man with a huge head, apparently in a towering rage from start to finish of the concert; I thought he could hardly refrain from whacking heads right and left instead of merely the desk. No doubt the performance was insufficiently rehearsed and execrable, anyhow I was not as much carried away as I expected.

As yet though there had been a great deal of simmering I was not in open disgrace with my father; he used even to do unexpected kind little things. For instance Aunt Susan had given me prints of some of my favourite pictures in the National Gallery—Bellini's Doge was one—and suddenly he told me to get them framed and put it down to him; perhaps he wished to rub in that there are blameless forms of art-devotion. Two things, my love of riding and a growing interest in politics, threw a frail

bridge of sympathy between us at times, and shortly before the crisis he presented me with a filly he had bred, and let me break her, which amused me and saved him expense. I schooled her regularly over the home fences, and as I was allowed to ride out alone—the least troublesome form of locomotion for the stable hands—I used to lark her surreptitiously over neighbour's hedges. There is a field near Cove, now full of aircraft sheds, where I once lay in a ditch, the filly on top of me, for quite ten minutes before I could wriggle myself free.

I did a certain amount of country house visiting. To be inspected on coming out by the head of my mother's family, Sir Henry Stracey, was a ceremony that ranked only second to presentation at Court, and I recollect that on the way down to Rackheath I got a bit of coal dust into my eye and arrived with it bunged up. As usual there was no weak display of pity, only extreme irritation on my mother's part at such a thing happening 'just when I wanted you to look your best for Uncle Henry.' The Straceys of that generation were the most musical family I ever met in England, and I remember saying naïvely to my cousin Diana: 'Why, you're almost as musical as me!'

Another visit that left an impression was one paid with my father to his life-long friend Mr. Staniforth of Windermere, an immensely rich old Quaker of purest breed, who wore a broad-brimmed beaver hat, had never crossed the sea, and nevertheless was a tremendous power in the county. He was greatly entertained at learning that my luggage consisted of eight hats, no extra boots, and no nightgown, I having packed for myself; also at my addressing from his house a tremendous letter to the *Times* about 'English Apathy as regards Wagner.' I had already translated two or three articles from Schumann's delightful 'Music and Musicians' for *Macmillan's Magazine*, and hopes had been held out that further translations would be favourably considered; hence I was surprised and disgusted to receive a polite intimation that my letter would not appear in the columns of the *Times*.

Of course too there were visits to the married sisters. While staying with Alice and Harry Davidson in Edinburgh I wrote the ballad 'Schön Rohtraut,' with which I was soon to sing myself into musical circles at Leipzig—also went to balls, and was entranced by what I had never seen before, reels danced in costume and to perfection. On the way home I stayed with Mary and Charlie Hunter in Northumberland, going out hunting on the only animal that could be raised for me—a huge heavy horse that drew old Mr. Hunter's coal cart, and was supposed never to have jumped a fence in its life. On that day it got over or through a good many—one could hardly call it jumping—and I enjoyed myself immensely. But all the time the conviction grew and grew that nothing was any good save one thing, and that go to Leipzig I must.

Occasionally, though very rarely, I went to a concert in London, being met at Waterloo and convoyed to St. James's Hall by some approved friend, or perhaps by Aunt Susan's maid, and on one occasion was actually presented to Frau Schumann and her daughters. This great event was engineered by a friend of mine, Mrs. George Schwabe, of whom more will be related presently, whose mother-in-law—another personality who will reappear in these pages—was an old friend of Frau Schumann's. The extraordinary thing is that in the blaze of impressions I was to gain in after life of that wonderful woman, all recollections of our first meeting have faded, but I gather from a remark in one of Mr. Ewing's letters that she gave my musical aspirations her blessing. She could do no less!

Soon after I struck what may rank as a half-milestone in my journey; for the first time I heard Brahms. The occasion was a Saturday Popular Concert at which the 'Liebeslieder Waltzer' were sung by four persons, three of whom (the Germans) knew the composer personally and afterwards became factors in my life. They were Fräuleins Friedländer and Redeker, Mr. Shakespeare and George Henschel. That day I saw the whole Brahms; other bigger, and, to use the language of pedants, more important

works of his were to kindle fresh fires later on, but his genius possessed me then and there in a flash. I went home with a definite resolution in my heart. . . .

That night there was a discussion at dinner as to which Drawing Room I had better be presented at. Suddenly I announced it was useless to present me at all, since I intended to go to Leipzig, even if I had to run away from home, and starve when I got there. . . .

I almost despair of anyone believing to-day, so quickly has the world moved since then, what such a step stood for in my father's mind. We knew no artists, and to him the word simply meant people who are out to break the ten commandments. It is no exaggeration to say that the life I proposed to lead seemed to him equivalent to going on the streets; hence the strange phrase he hurled at me, harking back in his fury to the language of Webster's or Congreve's outraged fathers: 'I would sooner see you under the sod.'

After a period of vain efforts to overcome his resistance, which became so terrific that it was no longer possible to broach the subject at all, I quite deliberately adopted the methods used years afterwards in political warfare by other women, who, having plumbed the depths of masculine prejudice, came to see this was the only road to victory. I not only unfurled the red flag, but determined to make life at home so intolerable that they would have to let me go for their own sakes. (I say 'they,' but here again I felt that, whatever my mother might say in public, she was secretly with me.) In those days no decent girls travelled alone, third class and omnibuses were things unheard of in our world, and I had no money; but I would slip away across the fields to Farnborough Station, travel third to London, and proceed by omnibus to any concert I fancied. The money difficulty was met by borrowing 5s. from tradesmen we dealt with on the Green, or the postman, 'to be put down to the General.' In order to be close to Joachim and his companions I would stand

for hours in the queue at St. James's Hall, and ah! the revelation of hearing Schubert's A Minor quartett! . . . All my life his music has been perhaps nearer my heart than any other—that crystal stream welling and welling for ever. . . .

From my place I used to watch George Eliot and her husband sitting together in the stalls like two elderly lovebirds, and was irritated by Lewes's habit of beating time on her arm with his *pince-nez*. There is a well-known syncopated passage in Beethoven's Quartett, Op. 142, and I noted with scornful amusement how the eyeglass, after a moment of hesitation, would begin marking the wrong beat, again hover uncertainly, and presently resume the right one with triumphant emphasis as if nothing had happened. All this George Eliot took as calmly as if she were the Sphinx, and Lewes an Arab brushing flies off her massive flanks.

The greatest excitement was one day when with beating heart I forced my way past Mr. Chappell's Cerberus into the Artists' Room—a place more sacredly awful to me than the Holy of Holies can ever have been to young Levite—and made the acquaintance of Fräuleins Friedländer and Redeker, expressed to them my admiration of their singing, and fell madly in love with Redeker, whose rendering of that divine love song: 'Wie bist du meine Kõnigin' had all but torn the heart out of my body. They were good-naturedly touched by such enthusiasm and begged me to come and see them some morning, which I did, climbing up stairs upon stairs to the room they shared. It was at 11 a.m., they were in *déshabillé*, the beds unmade, and they were sipping port out of an egg-cup. This unaccustomed sight gave me rather a shock, and for a moment I thought of my father, but supposed it was just part of the artist life; and indeed a few months later such a spectacle would have made no more impression on me than did Mr. Lewes's eyeglass on George Eliot.

My financial arrangements with the tradesmen came out

of course, as they were meant to, and to my father's ragings I stubbornly replied: 'You won't let me go to Leipzig so of course I have to go to London to hear music.' From this moment he became convinced that, freed from control, I should squander money right and left, and one of the stock phrases was: 'We shall have to sell your mother's diamonds'—a calamity that ranked in our minds with expedients such as debasing the coinage. But in this phrase I thought I saw a weakening of will; he was actually considering possible consequences of surrender! . . .

I had a few friends who backed me up more or less openly and were consequently looked on with disfavour at home. To this rule Barbara Hamley, now Lady Ernle, proved an exception, contriving in a miraculous manner to be my friend and yet keep on excellent terms with the parents, who delighted in her. She effected this miracle by a blend of tact, reasonableness, and sense of humour that must have oiled many locks in her course through life; moreover, but for her sympathy with the Frimhurst rebel, she was a perfectly normal, model young lady, who kept house with great success for her adored and adoring uncle, Sir Edward Hamley, then Commander of the Staff College (one of whose sympathetic traits was a great admiration for my mother). Thus she was in a favourable situation for operations, and her championship of me included a useful element—full comprehension of my father's point of view.

Not so that of Mrs. George Schwabe, daughter of Lord Justice James, a clever, hard riding, whist-playing, particularly cherished friend of mine, who as radical, and one justly suspected of unorthodox views on religion, naturally considered this opposition to my German plans ridiculous and out of date. So too did Mrs. Napier, wife of her first cousin General William Napier (the historian's son), who was then in command—or rather Mrs. Napier was in command—at Sandhurst. This delightful champion of mine had rebel blood in her own veins, her father, fierce eagle-eyed Sir Charles Napier, whom his daughter was as like

as two peas, having eloped with her mother, a Greek. It goes without saying that these two friends of mine were constant subjects of strife, and if my mother, jealous by nature, was specially so in these cases, who can wonder? It was all very well for Mrs. Napier to say right and left: 'Of course dear little Ethel must go to Leipzig'—to say it even to my parents themselves, which she did, for she came of a fearless stock. *She* was not my mother, *she* had not to endure daily scenes with my father—scenes which became more frequent and furious as time went on. For towards the end I struck altogether, refused to go to Church, refused to sing at our dinner-parties, refused to go out riding, refused to speak to any one, and one day my father's boot all but penetrated a panel of my locked bedroom door! . . .

. . . . . .

There was nothing for it but to capitulate! Fräulein Friedländer was able, by some miracle, to produce adequate testimony to the respectability of her aunt, Frau Professor Heimbach, who lived at Leipzig, and would certainly be willing to take me under her wing till her very own mother had a room at my disposal; the terms suggested confirmed Mary Schwabe's reports as to the cheapness of life in Germany; my father named the maximum of allowance he could make me; it was pronounced to be sufficient, with care; and finally, on July 26, 1877, under the charge of Harry Davidson, who knew Germany well, I was packed off, on trial and in deep disgrace, but too madly happy to mind about that, to the haven of my seven years' longing.

APPENDIX 1

pp. 135 to 156

(*a*) Letter from Mrs. Opie, March 1848 . . . 135

(*b*) Letters from S.D., a Schoolboy Admirer aged Thirteen 136

(*c*) Letters from my Mother, 1873-1875 . . . 139

(*d*) Letters from Alexander Ewing, Esq., 1876-1877 144

(*a*)

From Amelia Opie to my Grandmother, on the Occasion of my Father's Engagement to my Mother.

[*Note. I give this letter chiefly because of the tribute to Bonnemaman; also because I like to think that Mrs. Opie, by that time immersed in good works, nevertheless took pleasure in alluding to her former brilliant career in the world of fashion.*]

Castle Meadow: March 12, 1848.

My dear Friend,—Captain Smyth's engagement to the young lady whose lovely mother I met at General Lafayette's in Paris some years ago, was an agreeable surprise to me, and I heartily congratulate you all on so desirable an event. Obliged as he will be some months hence to return to his duties in India, I rejoice to learn that the pain he may feel in leaving those other duties which he so well and affectionately fulfilled at home will be mitigated by the consciousness that he carries with him to his *distant* home such a charming and accomplished companion as, I am told, the bride is.

My cough and cold are really better to-day and I hope to be at the Deanery on the evening of the 15th of this month and meet thy daughter there.

With kindest regards to thee and thy family,

I am thy sympathizer and sincere friend,

AMELIA OPIE.

(*b*)

FROM S.D. (A SCHOOLBOY ADMIRER, AGED 13).

[*Note.*—*'S. D.' was the son of country neighbours of ours. His great obsession was to be 'gentlemanly'—an ambition which somewhat tempers the ardours of his thirteen years; nevertheless our relations, though tender, seem to have lacked the repose characteristic of the type he aimed at. It will be noticed that the references to Mary grow more and more insistent, and as No.* 8 *is the last letter of the series, I imagine that soon after it was written the usual transfer of affection took place.*]

(1)

My very dearest Ethel,—I beg and beseech you not to be angry with me for not writing before, but I do assure you on my word of *honour* that I have not a bit of time in this beastly place to write letters, not *even* to *you*. I took your sentence and read it over again several times, and when I found out what it meant I was *very glad*. Hurrah, hurrah, the holidays are soon coming and then *won't* we have a lark? Why I declare it will be as good as donkey riding to see you skating away as gracefully as a swallow skims the earth, doing the outside and inside edge which I hear you do *splendidly*. I mean to learn and skate and then *perhaps* I may have the long looked-for pleasure and honour of skating with *you*. I hope you have quite forgiven me for my ungentlemanly conduct, but I assure you I did not mean to be haughty and grand, in fact it never entered into my mind. I have another thing to ask, if Mary has quite forgiven me for getting her into such a scrape and *not getting her out of it*.

With the old usual fond love I remain ever

Your most devoted *loving* friend *for ever*,

S.

(2)

My dearest Ethel,—I must say I was greatly offended, but however there is an old saying ' all's well that ends well ' and as you have greatly *improved* my *temper* I have quite forgotten it. Please do not say anything more about the locket, it was hardly worth giving to *you* and you know I hate flattery, but then of course I don't mind it from *you*. How is that *dear darling* BEAST R. S.? I hope very ill. If you go to see the Mater will you give my poor old dog a kiss from me, and tell Mary to give Jack's dog Sailor one. I know Brin will not bite *you*, because, like his master, he is *very particular*. . . .

(3)

. . . Have you been riding that *happy* donkey again, and have you been up in the Royal Ethel[1] again? Do you remember our seat at the top? Oh those happy rides even on donkeys!! Jack has gone back to Harrow. I forgot to tell you one of the R— girls is in love with him but of course he does not return it as *his views are somewhere else ! ! !* . . . .

I will wear the *ring always* for your own *dear* sake. . . .

(4)

. . . I hope you don't think I was rude that evening in not paying you any attention; it was because you were painting and I thought you would not care to talk. Now I am going to ask you a serious question, but think it *well* over before you reply; and that is have you forgiven me enough to ride with me in the holidays, not on donkeys but on ponies? Because I am going to ask the Governor to borrow that pony again for me, as he is better than nothing and goes splendidly with spurs. *Mind you think before you answer.*

In case you should hear of it I daresay you will wonder why I do not wear the ring, but *that* is *far* too precious to wear at school: why, the fellows would have it off and break it in a very short time. Was it not odd the other day when some of the fellows were telling us ghost stories that one of them should tell the one *you* told me in that

[1] An oak-tree.

dear darling oak tree where I have spent some of the happiest hours of my life about?

With the fondest love *possible*, I remain ever my very dearest Ethel your *most loving* friend for *ever*.

S.

P.S.—The scratchings out are only mistakes.

(5)

. . . Now that we are friends again I must tell you something I was *not quite* honest about, that is I *lost* the ring, but still I thought I would not tell you just then but wait and see if I would not find it: imagine my *delight* and *joy* when I found it lying on the washing-stand, where it must have been lying several days, and now it is looking as pretty as ever on my finger, with the white stone upwards. I am in such spirits about finding the ring that I have been jumping about, and have just fallen off my chair: of course that is not the only reason; the great reason is that *sweet* letter from you. . . .

I am sorry to hear Mary and Neaner have colds: colds are such horrible things are they not? . . . I heard Alice looked charming, but I should think she felt rather nervous when she was making her bow. I should like to see you at your first Drawing Room: *you* would not feel nervous, would you? nor would Mary I should think. . . . I hope you saw your name in Sheldrake's paper. I am pleased to hear he told the truth for once, because of course *you* played *beautifully* as you always do, because you couldn't help it. . . . Remember me kindly to Mary. I dare not send my love because old Jack *would be angry*. . . .

(6)

Dearest Ethel,—A million thanks for your *charming* note: it seems a year since I saw you last; not that I shall ever forget the happiest days I ever spent in my life, which were at Frimhurst! oh it was a jolly time was it not? I am going with the J's to see a cricket match between Harrow and Aldershot. I expect we shall get an awful licking (I mean Harrow) as they have got the weakest eleven that ever was known; at least I should think so. But then you see they make up for it by football, which

they can lick any school College or university at in the world. . . . We are going to the W's which is about nine miles off Frimley, and as he has a pony perhaps we shall be able to have what I have *so long* wished for, a pony ride together. . . . It is all humbug about my liking the youngest Miss J. I only did it to chaff you, only I am afraid I have offended you. Knowing your SWEET temper I know you will forgive me because I am *awfully* sorry about it.

Your loving friend,

S.

(7)

. . . I am riding such a beautiful cob; people say he does his 18 miles in the hour. I thought of you and how you would enjoy it. I do wish I could come over and see your *darling* self, but you see people won't lend their ponies to do 26 miles, for its 13 from here at least. . . . Please, as old Jack is not there, give my love to Mary if I may venture to send it. . . .

(8)

My dearest Ethel,—I daresay you wondered why I did not keep my promise in coming to see you, but the Governor made us come up to London or you may be sure I should not have missed the pleasure of seeing *you*. . . . I went to a Pantomime last night and enjoyed it as much as I could without *you* being there. . . . I am longing for the pleasure of seeing you, once more only. I brought the little squirrel up here with me, he is just as tame as ever and hops about like a child. . . .

Please write to me if you can spare the time. I must not ask *Mary* to write or dear old Jack may not like it. . . .

(c)

FROM MY MOTHER

[*Note.—These early letters of my Mother's are included mainly because she was my Mother. Letters were not her medium, partly owing to a rheumatic thumb which often made writing a painful effort. Still, given her turn of mind, it is amazing to find her passing on square roots as a matter of course, and I think too that the conflict of preoccupations in the Confirmation letters will appeal to other Mamas.*]

(1)

(*Before our Confirmation*)

1873.

My darling Ettie,—Your letter interested and pleased me more that I can express. God bless you my two darling girls, and may He make this time the turning point in your lives. What a charming person Mr. — must be! You must tell him I often think of him with a grateful heart for his kind interest in my children.

Your confirmation dresses are in course of progress and will be, I hope, just what they ought to be. I hope your old prints still fit. There are two very pretty ones making for each of you, one pink and the other blue.

We dined at the Burrells on Friday and met besides the Rectory party that nice little Mrs. Herries and a Captain and Mrs. Hitchcock from the Staff College. Emily looked and was charming; she spoke so nicely and affectionately of you both. She was in her black and yellow. Her friend Miss Mortimer looked very pretty, but was wonderfully dressed, like a jockey, in a pale yellow silk with long sleeves, a tight blue satin bodice *sleeveless*, and blue satin skirt, and blue satin stripes *across* the yellow sleeves; a very tight yellow silk skirt and very bunchy blue satin panier—one blue and one yellow feather in her hair!!

We are all going to the Staff College ball on Tuesday and to the State Ball on Wednesday, for which Alice has a very pretty new blue Balldress.

You heard what a favourable verdict the doctor gave about Johnny on Wednesday. They say there is not the slightest doubt of his recovery and that his health is much improved; going to Mr. Fry does him a great deal of good and makes him exert himself so much. . . .

And now my darlings goodbye,

Ever your fond Mother,

NINA SMYTH.

(2)

1873.

My darling Child,—I fully intend D. V. being present with Alice at your Confirmation, and if possible remaining over Sunday to take the Eucharist with you, as we do not start

for Germany till Tuesday 3rd. *Have you white gloves?* I will send the *shawls*, veils, and all complete with the dresses, and new Jaconet petticoats to wear with them. The hats and velvet shall be sent with the new prints. I have some difficulty in matching the grey for the skirts for the new Spring dresses but shall succeed in time. Meanwhile you might wear your *red* one on *cold* Sundays and your *green* petticoats with the grey on *bright* Sundays. . . . .

I will telegraph when we are to arrive.

Ever your fond Mother,
N. Smyth.

(3)

April 23 ! ! Ethel's Birthday !

Many many happy returns of the day my darling and may you be stronger in health by your next birthday and be the dear good girl to us *this* year that you have been all *last*. . . . . How tiresome about the cape! I cannot understand it. Are you sure putting the band a little lower will not do? The people have sent you so many things they must know you are not a little girl, but if it really is too small send it back with a note giving your height. . . .

The Keatings will lend you a guitar to see how you like it first and then we can buy one. God bless you my darling child, and may He watch over you and keep you in the right path.

Your fond Mother.

P.S.—I highly approve of your trying for the Cambridge Local Examination.

(4)

Frimhurst: July 1874.

Ettie darling,—It is indeed delightful about dear Alice and we are all very happy about it—he is such an excellent dear fellow and so clever and amusing; he will be a charming ingredient in our family circle. I will send the box by Papa who is taking Johnny up to Emma Arkwright's for a week to be under Hutton—I do so pray he may do him good. . . .

Johnny says he has got your letter this morning: the square root of $7\frac{1}{2}$ is 2·738612 etc. He couldn't quite make out whether the second number was 1650 or 1·650. The

square root of the former number is 41·21326 etc., of the later 1·284523 etc. I enclose a paper that will shew you how he did it.

We are all looking forward so much to your coming home, my darling. . . . I do not write more to-day as I have been quite laid up with rheumatism all down my side, and cannot go to the FitzRoy's Garden Party to-morrow, but dear Mrs. Longman will chaperone the girls. God bless you my child.

Your loving Mother.

(5)

July 1874.

My darling Child,—I am so glad your chest is better; I think you had better not give up painting, dear, unless it makes the pain worse, as it is a sedentary employment without much exertion of the mind, and therefore a relaxation. . . .

It appears that when Hutton saw Johnny first he thought worse of his hip than of anything else, but when he had examined the spine 6 or 7 times he put his finger on a particular place and said: 'this is the seat of the mischief' and after ordering his back to be fomented for two hours he returned, and after considerable manipulation all at once Reid and Papa heard a sort of click, and Hutton said 'there! it has now gone back to its place'; but then he worked the arm about a good deal which gave poor Johnny exquisite pain and exhausted him terribly. He says Johnny must return to him in a month. . . . Everyone is so hopeful! When poor F. L. consulted Hutton he told him he could do nothing for him, and when he saw Johnny he said he could make a cure of him. May it please the Almighty in His mercy to restore our darling to health! . . .

(6)

Frimhurst.

My darling Ettie,—You see Johnny has taken up your Exam. Papers and of his own accord said he should like to help you, which is a very good thing for you both. . . . We all went yesterday to see some games given by the Highland Brigade. While the 'tug-of-war' between the

Artillery and the 42nd was going on, it was great fun to see Papa crouching down, leaning on his umbrella, shouting and encouraging the Artillery who ought to have won, but one man slipped up and was disabled. . . .

I think the affair between Captain — and Miss — will certainly come off after all; *I* have done my best. . . . The guitar shall *I promise*, be returned to-day. It had been put up in your room, so being out of sight was, I fear, out of mind. . . .

(7)

Frimhurst: January 1875.

Mon enfant chérie,—Au contraire je suis très contente de ta bonne petite lettre, il n'y avait aucune faute de grammaire, ou d'ortographe, mais de temps en temps une erreur de tournure de phrase. Mais ceci ne peut s'acquérir, et même c'est étonnant que tu t'exprimes si bien, ayant si peu l'occasion de parler. . . . Mais, ma petite, il faut absolument que tu reviennes Lundi prochain. Mary doit s'en aller à Trelyddon, et Alice en a encore pour trois semaines de sa *cuisine* à Londres, et nous ne pouvons rester sans fille du tout à la maison, en ayant 3! . . . Dis mille choses gracieuses et aimables de ma part à Mme. Bourne, en la remerciant de tout cœur pour toute sa bonté à ton égard. . . .

(8)

[*Written after Johnny's death, while on a first visit to Alice's home. I was staying with Mary and Charlie.*]

Muirhouse, Davidson's Mains, Midlothian: Autumn '75.

Ettie darling,—Mind you wrap up well for your trip here on Monday—put on a long-sleeved jersey as it's very cold here. Alice says she fears you'll find it dull, but I don't for a moment, for there's always someone in the house and they're passionately fond of music and understand about it. Then there are always Jeux d'Esprit going on, versifying themes, etc. Mr. Davidson is the jolliest most cheery old man in the world, reads everything so well, from Shakespeare to a comic song, and they are so warm and kind and affectionate in their manner, not a bit stiff or formal as I thought they would be. As for dear

Harry, all his faults are *manner*, but he is really very dear in his own house, so very thoughtful and considerate. Alice has such an interminable cold that Mr. Davidson, who just worships her, calls her ' Madame Catarrh.' . . .

I shall leave my ermine muff and collarette behind here for you. Tell them at Corbridge not to let anyone come and meet me; it must be a trouble as I know they are all busy now, more or less, and I am old and ugly enough to take care of Bob and myself.

God bless you dear. I wish I could have had a peep at you.

Love to all who like it.

Your loving Mother.

P.S.—I am rather nervous about my Mary. I hope she has not been leaping about too much.

(*d*)

FROM ALEXANDER EWING, ESQ., A.S.C.

(Composer of ' Jerusalem the Golden.')

[*Note.—Mr. Ewing's letters will hardly interest any but musicians, except perhaps No. 8—a vivid description of a Rubinstein Recital—and the last two letters of farewell from the master, who had missed his vocation, to the pupil about to take up her own. No. 9 is the letter which, surreptitiously read by my father, brought my Harmony instruction to an abrupt end.*]

(1)

January 17, 1876.

Dear Miss Smyth,—I am so much obliged to you for the music which you have sent (and for the most brilliant of notes!). I think the little Kirchner things are quite of the right sort.

The large class of our fellow creatures whom you so aptly depict in two words, what do they do with the above phrase? When they hear the D don't they think the performer has hit a wrong note? (I knew one of them once—a so-called ' Great Musician ' too—who described Bach's fugues as ' those things that sound as if they were all wrong.')

No. 2 is very fresh and bright. I 'nod my head' at it as well as them, tho' perhaps for other reasons.

No. 3 would scarce have existed but for Schumann; it dreams prettily.

No. 4. Very Schumannesque.

No. 5. A gem, not like anybody else. I think might be a genuine 'popular ballad' of some northern race, dark, true and tender.

No. 6. Most charming. Like (for one thing) a young dryad dancing alone in a forest glade (I can't help it if this seems absurd).

No. 7. Very new. It says something several times, with great distinctness, but as yet I have not gathered what.

No. 8. I think almost too sketchy except the end; and No. 9 seems almost perfect.

I was careful to form all these impressions without looking again at what you had said, and now I see you do not always quite agree with them.

'Dodelinette' is nice and pretty, and the last pages evidently quite like the clock with the weak heart (or mainspring).

I send you volume 1 of Schumann's 'Gesammelte Schriften.' I have little doubt you will like it, and if so, there is another volume, when you want it. You must pardon its tattered condition, also my most reprehensible habit of scoring passages which strike me at particular moments violently with pencil marks, etc.

I also send you one of Liszt's most recent things. What would those who take such pains to call spades agricultural implements say to some of his chords and progressions? Please picture to yourself the effect of the orchestration as well as you can, and don't miss where the trumpets and trombones come crashing and blazing in *ff.* at the passage—'The Archangel Michael. . . Flames. . . from every window!'

I am,
Very truly yours,
Alexander Ewing.

We are very sorry you are not to be at the theatricals.

I hope you admire the way my parcels are sealed. A clerk did it.

(2)

Aldershot: March 8, 1876.

. . . I think haste is what you have to guard against at present. It must be that only which makes you mistake chords and omit characteristic intervals.

You know (please think of it now, oh Sturm and Drang!) there is no hurry!

Pardon my preaching and

Believe me (in haste), etc.

(3)

March 11 (?), 1876.

. . . I yesterday went to St. James's Hall to hear Brahms's Sestett, which some say is his very best work as yet. It was perfectly divine; a real Master-work, quite fit to stand alongside the greatest men's productions. Schumann was not wrong when, among the last things he said, before the dark clouds veiled him as he 'set' on earth, he prophesied Brahms's greatness.

You are very good to have got up to the Alto clef. I should like you, as soon as you can, now, to get accustomed to the Soprano one—and then you will have done (in fact you have already done) what not every 'great' amateur musician has.

You know that expression 'a great musician,' and what (in the mouths of the *canaille*) it implies? I like to see their faces, when, on making acquaintance with one, they say, by way of being pleasant and polite, 'You are a great musician, are you not?'

'That I certainly am *not*,' is what I generally imply in so many words—and it is then that they look funny. . . .

(4)

Aldershot: March 14, 1876.

. . . As I go on really studying music properly, I feel it more and more hateful to do anything else. I feel sure I shall take to it altogether some day. Meanwhile one must go on 'making wings for flight' as Goethe says somewhere; and then, when they are ready, hey! for the upper ether.

We have a concert on Monday, I think it will be pretty good. If you please we are going to produce R. Wagner, no less! The Wedding Chorus from Lohengrin! What think ye of that? . . .

(5)

(?) 1876.

. . . I am sending you the programme of yesterday, that you may look at the motifs of Brahms's Sestett—though that will give you no idea of the divine manner in which they are worked up. I am glad to know that one may write at present; I did not know it when I wrote the former sheet—('Twere well, however, to consign the present page at once to cremation, were it not?) . . .

You once asked if I could draw. I can't, but you will find, on page 1160 of the programme book, a sketch of George Eliot which I did yesterday as she sat in the Concert Room. It really is like her. Lewes is a very repulsive creature—and two ladies (with brains) who were with me shrieked at him worse than I. He 'nodded his empty head' (I don't forget your hits!) wherever the music was lightest and shallowest. During a scherzo, for instance, it went like a mandarin's in a tea-shop window. I am far from meaning that it is empty except as regards music, for I think some of his writing most able—but the head that noddles at a scherzo must be empty of that. G. Eliot sits and gazes, as if afar, with a great rough powerful face. She goes to all these St. J. Hall Concerts, and I should think, and hope, 'twas a real comfort to her great soul (for a Lewes cannot be, that I am sure of) and she is worked harder than any carthorse.[1] . . .

What an awful day! I think Spring is behind this gale. I long for her!

(6)

(?) 1876.

. . . Not knowing whether you have seen Blackwood for May, I just transcribe you, as a sister translator, this specimen of the English tongue written by a Leipzig student thereof.

[1] As we know now, Lewes was, on the contrary, George Eliot's greatest comfort.

'The Calmness of Charles XII'

'The King was in his cabin dictating a letter to his Secretary. A bomb fell on the house and got through the roof. The Secretary turned his confounded looks to the King. "Well," said the King, "what do you have then? why let you fall your pen?"

'"Oh, sire, the bomb." "Well," said the King, "which reference has that with the letter I dictate in this moment?" and he continued dictating with the greatest coldbloodedness.'

Nothing much more delightful in its line has met my gaze for long.

(7)

(?) 1876.

. . . I heard Madame Schumann yesterday play unsurpassably, Nos. 2, 5, 4 and 8 of her husband's Kreisleriana. The Concert Room was thronged to the roof, and contained Royalty in the front row. She is in great form, quite recovered apparently. It is a thing altogether unparalleled in its way to hear her play his things. It is quite as if he were in the midst of us (as doubtless he is). When one thinks of all their story, and looks at her, surviving still to interpret him to us, there is a something quite *sui generis* about it all.

A pupil of hers whom I know has told me, that she used, some years since, to 'feel' it a lot that he was not more widely known, and consequently worshipped in this country. The fullness of time has brought it about, and she has lived to see it, that he is about the best and most widely beloved of all the writers; as witness the gathering of yesterday to do honour to her and to him. . . .

(8)

May 3, 1876.

My dear Miss Smyth,—Here followeth some account of Rubinstein's first recital.

We had made special arrangements of our classes at the Academy to admit of our going to this one; so, when pianoforte class was over, Franklin Taylor and I started

off together, and I swept him at my usual rapid pace down Regent Street, being anxious not to lose one of the great man's notes. (He can't keep up like you!) We were in time, however; his stall was not near mine, and we separated. But I was right in the centre of a constellation of friends (I may term them so—I look on them as a kind of friend, tho' they know me not; I owe them all thanks for many a happiness, and they belong to our race) la Krebs (only four people intervening between us), Mr. Manns, with his strange weird face, and his brilliant eyes, and Sir Julius Benedict. Many a time in the course of the day I read the same things in their faces that I felt within me.

Krebs, when in repose, sitting listening to another, not playing herself, is very much more thoughtful looking than as we see her at the instrument—a very refined type of face it seemed, and a nice speaking voice. I heard her talking to her friend as we came out, in first-rate English. I believe we should like her.

The great Maestro came on, punctually to his time.

A strange looking being. At first sight he loomed broad and uncouth. I am glad to find he is much younger than I expected—I should think he is barely my age, but it's not easy to say what his age is. His hair is à la Henry Holmes, but much more so. It is about as wild as Beethoven's. I suppose it may be brushed sometimes, but I should think not as often as it might.

General effect at the first glance, something like a Bear out of the woods. Gave a slight —very slight—bend of his head, sat down, and commenced instanter a prelude of Bach's, no music before him, of course, from beginning to end. This bend of his seemed markedly *dédaigneux*, and that I thought right. The last time he was here the people jeered at him.

He was set down to play a prelude and fugue of Bach's, but he did play two preludes and fugues (I quite forget which they were).

I thought to myself, 'Is he going to be a disappointment?' I have heard others play Bach just as well as he did—Bülow, Krebs, etc. There was a wondrous power of finger-touch in rapid passages, but that was the only thing at all remarkable about this.

Scarcely taking breath after them, he commenced a slow movement of Mozart, with a rondo after it. Immediately we were in a new world—a world of grace, fairy lightness, and pure, childlike, innocent beauty.

More men than one, you see, evidently, under this bear's hide. The most refined woman could not have been more womanly refined than he was here—and yet there was a man's power veiled behind it. La Krebs and I were both fetched by this performance, and, as by one consent, led off a burst of applause of it. Still he scarce took any notice, but launched out almost without a breath into Beethoven's great Sonata Appassionata—Op. 57.

The scene changed now, with a vengeance. There came tremendous rushes and bursts, given with a swaying power, a marvellous clearness, a rapid surging and seething and subsiding, which absolutely electrified the crowd of listeners. (Manns glowed over these orchestral effects—as well he might). The slow movement glided its way like a gentle river, every shade of it rendered with the most loving observance, and the most poetic feeling. Then came the most stormy finale. Towards the close of this, he was simply like some inspired thing, struggling (and visibly, with every muscle of his body) as with a contending demon, till at the close, with a mighty grasp and shove, he bound him down and held him, subservient to his will.

This rather fanciful language does, I assure you, convey quite what it was like to me.

There was a break in the programme here; he rose up to go out. The people fairly shouted at him in a way I have never heard an audience shout in England. Now for the first time he made a low obeisance. They called him on three times; he came lumbering on each time, and bowed again, his tangled mane falling over his face, and he taking hold of it awkwardly with one hand to put it away.

And now we all breathed for a while.

Next came Schumann's Kreisleriana—the whole of them. I heard (you know) her play some of them. She played them best, I think; but he has one advantage over her—a Cantabile which surely nobody else ever approached, and which must be heard to be understood, such is its power, its variety, and its perfection.

The same three calls on, after these.

Chopin's Sonata (the one with the Funeral March) came next. We read, in that Leipzig notice, how great his playing of Chopin is. It was the best thing of all. Totally different to everything else. The Funeral March—I have known it (or thought so) from childhood. Well, I tell you (I won't tell anybody else, except perhaps my wife), I cried at it like a child! There! I felt that tears must come—I tried to keep them back, but back they would not be kept—they rolled down my cheeks. I can't tell you exactly what made them come. He played it with the most utter simplicity—and yet with such a hidden sort of depth. I think it was more the gradual crescendo than anything else which went so to one's heart. It was such utter perfection of gradualness. The thing seemed to come on and on, and grow and swell, in its simple depth of sadness.

And it went away in the same manner. The passage which was *fff* when it first spoke, was, at the end, though still *ff* with reference to the rest, still soft and distant now; the long mournful cortege had, you see, passed on, and was lost in the distance. Nobody could move to applaud it. After the last echoes of it ceased to be distinguishable, he burst into the finale.

Three times called on after this Sonata. Then 4 Etudes of Chopin's, one of them the one I called 'Woe' to you. He read it on the same principle as I do. They were as marvellous as all the rest. The pace at which he took some of them was almost incredible. But as for 'missing notes;' . . . Bah!

He finished with several charming things of his own, but I think we were all too used up with emotion to enjoy them as we might had not so much gone before. I doubt not they will come back to us. The last, a Valse Caprice, was marvellous. He thundered in it, and showered the lightest fairy pearls, and sang, and played tricksy games—and, called on 3 times as usual, made his lumbering bows, and awkwardly moved back his mane with one of his hands, and disappeared.

His face is the strangest compound of beauty and ugliness, the masculine, and the feminine. In the profile, the beauty predominates—the refinement of the profile

is striking. The reverse is the case with the front face. The playing is something the same—marvellous, nay, gigantic; masculine power and energy, and the utmost delicacy of feminine refinement—both in every grade of intensity. Add to this touches of every description in a degree of perfection which I can't conceive surpassed.

Heigho! I have given you a 'notice' with a vengeance. I have to be up at 7 to-morrow to go to town to Prout, and must now see about some sleep. I hope I shall hear from you soon; probably I shall to-morrow.

I am ever most truly yours.

P.S.—I have no doubt we shall find people to say he 'thumps' too much and that sort of thing. Some of his gestures occasionally verge on the ludicrous.

(9)

June, 1876.

. . . It does strike one with amazement when one sees the enormous masses of people whose lines go not beyond housekeeping and petty scandal. I suppose they are of such a different race to the likes of us, that they find an equal difficulty in comprehending how we can get on without their pursuits.

The Queen has been here to-day, but, not being obliged to appear, I went not near Her Gracious Majesty.

In moments or hours of—well—despondency, which will come upon one now and then (this is a continuation of the previous paragraph) one sometimes thinks what an uphill struggle it is for our race. These other people go calmly sloping along through their narrow restricted orbits; their joys and their sorrows are feeble and dim. This we know (though they do not), because ours flash and blaze, and then sink down into the very bulb of the thermometer. We don't know much Rest. Not that we really want to, for Action is the Bliss of the Spirit, but the Body cries out for it at times. I suppose that is, of course, why so many of us die so young.

And are they, who go so soon, to be called happy—glorious beings, for instance, like Mozart, Mendelssohn,

Chopin, Schumann—gone away into ' das Stille Land ' as Uhland names it, just, one would think, when this world lay at their feet in all its loveliness? For, to us, with all its drawbacks, it is a lovely world and life. What race finds so much delight in it as ours? The other tribes do not know what it is to us. They rest, and they housekeep, and make money, and have, of course, their lesser griefs and gladnesses, and stare at us, and deem us more or less mad, tho', very often, not a bad sort of folk in our way. Because we treat them much more kindly and considerately than they treat us. They torture and hamper us, and jar our souls, without knowing what they are about; but we spare them, and serve them, and do our best for them, and only wish to be away from them and among ourselves. But I would we knew ' whither we are wending ' (to quote the familiar church song).

That the world into which we are wending is not a ' Stille Land ' I am convinced—but oh, that one knew! If it be not a land of action and of bliss for the Spirit, then, for goodness sake, let us eat, drink and be merry in this, which we know something about. But all those glorious intelligences which we know (in a degree) as we do ourselves, never can merely ' go out ' as Leibgeber calls it.

You think, do you not, that of all the Arts ours is the most like a clear proof of this? The musician's creations live after his death in a peculiar manner which no other artist's do. A picture rots, a statue crumbles to dust. A work of Bach's is just as much alive as a work of Wagner's; and no more, nor less alive now than when he was alive himself. It exists for us on paper, and in performance; two kinds of existence, differing in degree perhaps, but the one quite as real as the other. At all times the essence of it is the Spirit. An orchestra of equal excellence, which should render a symphony of, say, Herz (if there were such a thing) and one of Beethoven—what would be the essence of the difference between the two works? Not the material part.

(Oh dear! what truisms I am putting down.)

Then are the works to possess this spiritual existence, and not the spirit which produced them?. . . . They may; one can't tell. But one can't believe it. . . .

(10)

Manchester: April 20, 1877.

I feel disposed to begin with a Jean Paulisches Vorwort[1] on the beginnings of letters, in certain cases. I will not call you 'My dear Miss Smyth.' I have tried it lately, but I shall not to-day. It is too like the lady in Dickens who always said 'Doyce & Clennam, I am sure more proper.' You and I are, at all events, brother and sister artists. The thing that it is most natural to me to call you is 'my child.' And as many other people do so I mean to do it too. One thing is, I know you don't mind what I call you, and that after all it makes no earthly difference.

End of the Vorwort or Extra Leaflet. Well then, my dear child, to take the end of your letter first, which is full of the strongest things you could say to me. 'Gratitude' is surely a misplaced word. We helped one another in the old times, and laboured side by side. They were happy times. I think no pleasure is so pure and great as working at something one loves with a person who is utterly sympathetic. Well, we had that enjoyment together for a good spell. Your mother did for it, effectually. If I spoke out my mind I should say with St. Paul (so that the most orthodox could find no logical objection) 'the Lord reward her according to her works.' But yet I shall not copy St. Paul herein, for I suppose she meant well. At all events since I, so to speak, lost you, my music has languished and withered, and at the present hour is dead within me. I find it too great a grind to work at it alone. It won't come. During latter months at Aldershot, all I did, except indeed reading Wagner, was perfunctory, teaching sort of work—in harness to turn mills for other people. Now even that is over.

But while I have been going downhill gradually into these deep places, you have been going along your upward path, making friends with some of the great and noble in the world of Art. You have got Madame Schumann's blessing, and you will prosper and flourish. I have often said I should yet be proud of my first harmony 'pupil' (though that is an improper term) and so I shall. Well—had I had some 20 years off my back, I might have come

[1] Preface.

along the path after, or with you. But those years will not be shaken off.

I do not yet know Brahms well enough to think so much of him as you do. I do not always get within his meaning. I know both Sestetts. I heard his last quartett—I think in B♭ major. I like it very much, and I liked the (so-called) 'Scherzo' best. It is no more a Scherzo than it is an Irish Jig, but it is a superb movement. The critics considered it unintelligible! I heard Madame Schumann & Co. play her husband's pianoforte quartett just as you say they did.

As you say, we shall probably meet some day. 'Les montagnes finissent toujours par se recontrer,' as says Cherbulliez. (Do you know him?) I doubt if we shall over the Wagner Concerts. I only can go to one and that the first. I trust you will manage to let me know any great events—such as your going to Dresden (?) and the like. Nobody can be much more interested in what happens to you. Though I am in the lows now, don't suppose I shan't manage to make head against them. I am *dépaysé*, and solitary—always hate new places and new people. Indeed this place and people seem rather repulsive to me at first, but no doubt they will improve. The wrench from Aldershot has been an awful one. . . .

I, too, have a good many friends of sorts, some new and some old. But one thing is certain; there is not one, nor can I suppose there ever will be, who can ever oust you from your place. It would have to be a second you to do so, and a second you does not exist. Now, my dear child, I must bid you good-bye, for the time. *Au revoir* I hope and believe it only is. We won't forget each other, nor all the brave old times when we laboured together. Believe me, then, always to be most truly yours,

ALEXANDER EWING.

(11)

[*On hearing I was really going to Leipzig.*]

May, 1877.

My dear Child and Friend,—I am so glad! This is really a great blessing—and coming so much sooner, too, than we could have expected. How happy you must be,

and how good it was of you to write off at once and let me know. Because, after all, nobody can rejoice at it more than I do. Ah! were I but coming too! . . . but you will tell me all about it, and I shall always apply to you for the latest information and tips. . . .

. . . Ebben; for the present I can no more—time presses and I want to catch you as early as possible with the heartfelt congratulations which you know will come from me. Between this and your departure we must meet and bid good-bye otherwise than in written words. The address I have given here—(don't lose it now!) is my office and will always find me. Any time, or where, you think we can met, I will come. Auf Wiedersehn.

Most truly yours,

A.E.

PART II

GERMANY AND TWO WINTERS IN ITALY

CHAPTER XIV

Summer 1877

Before embarking on the story of that happiest epoch of an artist's life, the spell of hard, hope-ridden work which lies between self-dedication and the endeavour to capture the interest of an indifferent world, it should be pointed out that the scene of that golden time was nothing less than a lingering bit of the dear old Germany of Heine and Goethe, doomed presently to vanish under the stress of Imperialism.

In those days there was a feud between Saxony and Prussia; Hanover considered herself an aristocratic breakwater against floods of vulgarity setting in from other states, and Bavaria hated them all impartially. This condition of things preserved exactly what Empire tends to destroy, an individual, dignified, self-sufficing life in each state. As Goethe has said talent can only thrive in peace and retirement, and in the days when little German Courts and middle-sized provincial towns were contentedly working out their own salvation, you got hundreds of quiet, beautiful gardens of art. These Empire sweeps away; competition with other countries ends in the industrialisation of everything, including music, and when, more than a quarter of a century later, I re-visited Leipzig, I found that was exactly what had happened; there, as elsewhere, a flashy chapter was being enacted that made one think with sadness and longing of past days.

Whether the war, which has brought so many chapters to an abrupt end, will restore dignity to Art remains to be

seen, but in any case the old setting is lost for ever. For this reason and not only because I loved it so dearly, it seems worth while recording my impressions of a by-gone epoch as minutely as I propose to do.

Of the journey I remember little, except that soon after crossing the Dutch frontier the train made straight for a distant range of mountains, and suddenly there was an opening in the chain, through which we passed with the river that had cloven it. This spot, one of the great gates into Germany, and which is like the Guildford gap in the Hog's Back on a huge scale, I have often seen again and never without a thrill. And then came a still more poignant moment, the slowing down through hideous suburbs, and the indescribable emotion with which I read the word 'Leipzig' on the platform board. We had breakfast at the little old Hôtel de Rom hard by, and sallied forth to find Frau Professor Heimbach's dwelling, the romantic name of which was Place de Repos, Treppe G.

Reposeful it certainly was, being a large block of a building well off the road, jammed in between two other equally hideous blocks; romantic no one could call it, but what of that? Between me and it hung a veil woven of youth and hope—the strongest web of romance; and as we stepped under a dingy archway into a courtyard leading to 'Treppe G,' I was passing through the Gate named Beautiful into the Chosen City. We clambered up three pairs of rotten wooden stairs, my brother-in-law curiously sniffing the odours that lingered about them—odours which I really believe are the monopoly of the two or three sluggish streams Leipzig is built on, one of which, the Pleisse at its worst, crawled by close to our house. A stout, shy, motherly person, clad in what I afterwards knew was her best gown, greeted us very pleasantly, and informed us (or rather Harry Davidson, for her Leipzig accent utterly defeated the little German I had) that I should not be cut off from England, in that she harboured another lodger—a 'charmanter Junge,'

Mr. B., nephew of a well-known potentate connected with *Punch* and a *protégé* of Frau Schumann's.

We deposited my luggage, inspected my room and the short wooden bedstead with a mountainous feather bed on it, and started off to view the town, which Harry had known in the past.

Even then it was full of charm; the walls and fortifications were gone, all except the Pleissenburg which, placed in an angle, pulled the whole inner circle of the old town together, and though really unbeautiful in itself, managed, with its squat tower and sturdy bulk, to look imposing. The 'ditch,' as the Germans call it, had been filled in and planted as a Promenade ages ago, and above it, on our side at least—for we were just without the Altstadt—the tall, narrow, tile-roofed houses of Dürer's pictures towered in a curve above the rise they were built on, and beautifully caught the evening light. Close to us, on the fringe of the old town, was the Thomas Kirche, where Bach played the organ, and the Thomas Schule, of which he was Cantor; this is the only dwelling-place of the Great Dead that ever moved me, hideous though it was. They have pulled down the Pleissenburg and the picturesque old mill beyond it, but I trust the Rathhaus is still standing. Not very superb late Renaissance, it is nevertheless a fascinating building, with its copper-clad pinnacles greened by verdigris, and the warm, sombre colour of the brick. In my time there were periodical agitations to clear it away, as also to widen three or four narrow streets close by, in which were still some fine old houses, but the Philistines were always overborne.

We lunched at the best restaurant in the town, Harry remarking it would reassure my father to hear what we had eaten for about 10d. each, and then walked out into the Rosenthal, a sort of park and wood combined—quite pretty in a stiff style, but reputed to smell of garlic in the spring to a degree that disconcerted even the most ardent lovers. Here I made my first amazed acquaintance with the well-known signboards 'Verboten' on which the German Empire

is run, and which met us at every turn; I had thought grass was meant to walk on, but evidently this was a mistake.

A peculiarity of Leipzig was, that the space between the vanished walls and the promenade was carved up into miniscule gardens about the size of a largish chapel in Westminster Abbey, which were let to anyone who chose to apply. We had a *rendezvous* at 4 o'clock to drink afternoon coffee with Frau Professor in her garden, the approximate spot being described beforehand, and a promise given that Mr. B., whom we had not yet seen, would be on the look-out for us. A very untidy youth of the artistic type, with a shock of fair hair hanging into his eyes, whose appearance would have disgusted my father, duly met us and conducted us to our garden, where Frau Professor and her niece Fräulein Friedländer had everything in readiness. In each of the gardens were a tiny summer-house and three or four trees; ours boasted no flowers, but, to our amazement, imbedded crazily in the shingle, were five croquet hoops; and here after coffee did we start the most fantastic game of croquet I ever played, Fräulein Friedländer and Harry against B. and me. If you could not get through your hoop because of a tree, you simply shifted the hoop, manipulating the angle a little to your advantage. B. was a player of the violent type whose great object was to cannon off the trees, as if by accident, right into the summer-house where Frau Professor and her cat were ensconced with their knitting. I say 'their' knitting, because we were told if the needles stopped one moment the cat became restless and wandered off into neighbouring gardens. When the balls began flying about, Frau Professor calmly piled up the crockery for safety behind the summer-house, and resumed her place, well tucking up her feet on the bars of another chair; and I said to myself, an old lady with such sound nerves must surely be easy to live with.

After that there was a gala supper in our flat; I remember we had partridges stuffed with sauerkraut, which were pressed on us as being 'fein und begannt.'

This phrase I meditated for a year or so, and eventually found out 'begannt' was the Saxon for 'pikant.' My brother-in-law, fortunately a smoker, was finally conducted downstairs by B., aided by the light of his own matches, leaving me to my first night under a German roof. Next day I saw him off from the station, and began life in a state of wild enthusiasm that transformed the little round rolls into manna, the thin coffee dear to Leipzigers into nectar, and even invested the sanitary arrangements with a sort of local-colour appropriateness. The only water the Town Council supplied in Place de Repos was a thin trickle from a tap in the kitchen, but as I was equal to cold tubs in those days this was of no consequence.

My diagnosis of my landlady's character proved correct; an easier, more philosophic temperament would be hard to find, and with B. to interpret, the accent difficulty was soon got over. But it was not till later days that one wrong impression was put right. When Fräulein Friedländer had spoken of her aunt, widow of Professor Heimbach, we imagined the title implied high university honours, as in cases like Darwin and Huxley; face to face with the lady, one could only suppose her eminent husband had risen from the ranks and married in earliest youth. Later I discovered that he was wholly unknown to fame, and indeed I was never able to learn which University had conferred his title on the late Herr Professor Heimbach.

Young B. turned out to be a harum-scarum, harmless sort of youth, whose parents had evidently dispensed with his presence during the summer holidays, for, as I now learned, the Long Vacation was in full swing. In my zeal to leave England I had omitted to make enquiries as to when the Conservatorium term began, and the place would be shut for a month yet; so as Fräulein Friedländer, her mother, and Fräulein Redeker of the Liebeslieder Walzer—also a Leipzig young lady—were to spend a fortnight in the Thüringer Forest, it was suggested I should accompany them. Fräulein Redeker, as I said before, was one of my 'passions,' and when informed that Henschel

was to join the party later, I had some notion of the unutterable happiness that was in store for me.

But only a vague notion, for what that first sojourn with real musicians in a little wooden house on the verge of the forest turned out to be, what words can tell? Let it be remembered that never in my life had I met anyone capable of judging whether or not I was the born musician Mr. Ewing proclaimed me, and after all he himself was but a gifted amateur. Here I found my compositions listened to by a man who himself was a composer, who as regards musical equipment was on a level with Brahms or anyone else in the great music world, and on his and other faces I read the desired verdict. But the chief bliss was less personal than that. Henschel is one of the superbly cultivated musical temperaments you find only in Germany and Austria; I have listened to many at work, but have never heard anything to compare with his singing—to his own accompaniment of course—of Brahms, Schubert, Beethoven—in fact any and every composer. He would sit down at the rickety old piano in our lodgings, and all the things in musical literature I had ever wanted to hear, not to speak of others I had never even heard of (including his own ' first fine careless rapture ' ' Trompeter Lieder '), were poured out before me. As some people rejoice in having seen Venice for the first time by moonlight, so I am thankful the ' Gruppe aus Tartarus ' was first made known to me by Henschel, and in my eyes this dear old friend, whom in after-years even my father came to be fond of, was like a god.

We used to take long walks, making for one of the Beerhouses doted about the forest, which superior people laugh at, but which I delight in, on our way singing Volkslieder in parts, the nearest thing to the improvisations of Slav Gipsy Orchestras I ever took part in. One day we got lost; it was stiflingly hot, the woods smelt like a great bath of pine-extract, and we felt we should die if we did not soon find our Beerhouse. Suddenly we came on it round a corner, and to my last hour I shall

remember the first glass of beer drunk that day! Henschel had just been somewhere with Brahms; and after telling us the great man's new symphony was to be produced at the Gewandhaus Concerts, conducted by the composer, in the coming season, I remember his presently pointing to me and saying laughingly to the others: 'Look at that face!' . . . Thrice in my life for a brief space I have been in Heaven, and the first time was in Thuringia.

One souvenir of that radiant fortnight remains with me: I always called Redeker 'die Königin,' because, as I think I mentioned, it was from her lips I first heard 'Wie bist du meine Königin'; so I cut out a cardboard crown, of the spiky Neptune kind, and induced her to be photographed sitting on a chair, I myself standing behind it in the act of crowning her. She afterwards married a well-known London physician, and as Lady Semon still possesses this treasure.

CHAPTER XV

Autumn 1877

While in Thuringia I had found out, to my horror, from two lodgers of Frau Friedländer's who were of the party, that in that house the piano was going all day, and that composing would have to be done, if at all, at night. I was in despair, but eventually a peaceful reshuffling of *pensionnaire* livestock took place between the sisters-in-law, and when we returned to Leipzig I settled down with Frau Professor for good and all. Somehow or other the fact that the only other lodger was a young man must have escaped the lynx-eyes at Frimhurst, for I cannot remember any fuss being made about it.

There was yet a week or so of idleness before the beginning of the term. I had been given a letter of introduction to one Leipzig big-wig, head of the great publishing firm Brockhaus, but had no idea of mortgaging my freedom yet awhile, so merely explored the town, enquired into prices, found out what music it was possible to hear in the slack season, and generally looked about me. My first discovery was that the place was full of French names like Place de Repos—relics of the Napoleonic era which a monarch with more historical sense and less Kultur than his grandson had not thought it necessary to germanise. If our old block still exists, which is not likely, no doubt it is now called 'Ruheplatz.' There were many other links with the French past, and I came to know an old lady, last survivor of one of the great burgher families, who stood with me in the window whence she had watched

Napoleon ride out of the gates to the battle of Leipzig. She told me he looked ' cross and insignificant '!

One day I saw that Hoffmann's Serenade in D, a piece of music I particularly wanted to hear, was to be played next evening at an open-air concert in the Rosenthal Restaurant, and announced that I meant to be present. Frau Professor said this was impossible, that no young girl could go to a place like that by herself, and she unfortunately could not take me as next day was ' Grosse Wäsche.' This was the great washing festival held once a month in households such as ours, and which, judging by an unsavoury mountain of dirty linen in a certain cupboard, was overdue. The idea of going with B. was ruled out of the question, so I hit upon a plan which this capital old lady somewhat reluctantly fell in with. I hired grey corkscrew curls and a large pair of horn spectacles, borrowed her thickest veil and her gown, which, after I had swathed myself in newspapers tightly tied on with string, and added other contrivances, was a perfect fit. Having finally painted in appropriate wrinkles, I sallied forth to the Rosenthal, sat down with a piece of knitting (for show only) at a small table, and asked for beer and a ' Schinken Brödchen '—that is buttered roll with ham in the middle.

It was a warm September night and the garden was full of burgher families, seated like me at little tables with beer and ham, and listening religiously to the really excellent music—in short it was the Germany of my dreams. The only illumination was Chinese lanterns, but even by daylight, I, my stoop, and my hobble would probably have passed muster. I looked about and saw B. sitting with two stout German youths, and presently I went up and asked him some question in a quavering old voice, explaining that I knew no German. The Serenade, a charming piece of music by the by, and everything else I heard that night, enchanted me, and by 11 o'clock I was unlocking our house-door, and picking my way by the light of the usual match among horrible islands of assorted ' Wäsche,' to my room. Frau Professor was so well broken to English

eccentricity, and so convinced that sons and daughters of our race can look after themselves, that she never even sat up for me—a fact which raised her immensely in my estimation. I had heard from B., whose room was next hers, that she snored more powerfully than ten strong men, owing, he thought, to the shape of her nose, which was snub and flat, like a small funnel driven inwards by a blow from a hammer. As I passed her door I observed that for once he had spoken the truth, being otherwise one of the harmless, improbable liars young men of his type often are.

Next day at lunch I suddenly repeated my question of the night before in the same quavering voice, and for a moment B. looked as if he were going mad, but he promised to keep the secret. When I became a Conservatorist I found I was already famous, this young man, who was always cadging for invitations, having supped out on that story ever since. But it never got to Frimhurst, which was the main point.

A few days before she left for London, Fräulein Friedländer took me to pay an éagerly awaited visit, for this was to be my introduction to the Leipzig music world. Again a climb up three pairs of rotten stairs, in one of the hideous buildings which flanked Place de Repos; and an hour later, sitting at tea—real tea—with my new friends, Herr Concert-Meister Röntgen, leader of the Gewandhaus orchestra, and his family, I had found an answer to the question, ' What went ye out for to seek?' In those walls was the concentrated essence of old German musical life, and without a moment's hesitation the whole dear family took me to their bosom.

It all began with a little sonata I had written, a certain B♭ in which proved to be the key of their hearts. He was Dutch by extraction, distant cousin of the X-ray discoverer —as great a gentleman and as true a musician as I have known. She was of the old Leipzig musical stock Klengel, a family that could raise a piano quintett among them-

selves, and together with their Röntgen cousins a small orchestra. Every violin sonata, every piano trio or quartett printed, would Frau Röntgen or her daughter tackle—the mother's performance unplaned perhaps, but of a fire and musicality that carried all before it. Their one servant was seldom a cooking genius and always needed supervision, and between two movements of a trio Frau Röntgen would cry: 'Line, thou canst take the Scherzo,' and fly off to the kitchen, Line replacing her on the music stool till eagerly swept off it again. I remember one occasion when dear old Papa Röntgen, as we used privately to call him, who had a delicate digestion, complained of the Egg-Dish (I do not know how else to translate that basis of German existence 'die Eier-Speise'), and his wife said with simple contrition, 'Yes, I know, it is my fault, I ought to have waited to see her brown it . . . but thou knowest how I love that Andante!'

Their son, Julius, composer, viola-player, pianist and all the rest of it, is, I think, still head of a Music Academy and conductor at Amsterdam, but Line took to marriage and babies and rather dropped her music. To see Julius and his mother playing pianoforte duetts was a sight that would nearly overwhelm strangers, the motions of their spirits being reproduced by their bodies in dramatic and absolutely identical gesture. This is what made the spectacle so curious; you could not believe but that some unseen power was manipulating a duplicate set of invisible wires. At the tender parts of the music they would smile the same ecstatic smile to themselves, or in extreme cases at each other; in stately passages their backs would become rigid, their elbows move slightly away from their sides, and their necks stiffen; at passionate moments they would hurl themselves backwards and forwards on their chairs (never sideways, for they respected each other's field of action) and the fervour or ferocity of their countenances was something I have only once seen equalled—by Sada Yacco's rejected admirer on the Japanese stage. It was all so natural and sincere, that though one could not help

smiling sometimes, it never interfered with your enjoyment, once you knew them well enough.

If any surviving members of that dear family should ever read these lines, I cannot think, knowing my devotion to their mother and how I reverenced her, that they will resent my poking a little harmless fun at her and Julius. It was merely an excrescence on the very thing I am extolling—the intimate, you may really say domestic, quality of music-making in those days.

Johanna, the eldest daughter, a particular friend of mine, was a character, and one of the most musical of people, though she played no instrument—already a sign of originality in that family. She was one of the few critics I listened to with respect, and had a phenomenally fine ear. Once I made her sit down sharply on the keyboard and tell me what notes were sounding; she began with the lower and upper ones, a trifle of course to such as her, but with the rest she was equally successful, as far as her bulk would let me check them. She would say, beginning from the bass: ' d, d♯—*no e*—f, f♯—*then nothing till* b♮,' and so on, till the echoes died into silence. Let any musician, choosing a slim collaborator if possible, try this and see how difficult it is. Johanna had little or no voice, and what there was of it was poor in quality, but no sheep dog ever kept his flock in better order than she the altos in choral singing.

She was religious and of a Lutheran turn of mind altogether—a slightly different thing to the Nonconformist conscience but of the same family—in spite of which, finding out that she did not know Maupassant, I rashly lent her a carefully selected volume of her stories. But next day she gave it back with a wonderful snort of which she had the secret, conveying remonstrance with me, pride in her own incorruptibility, and confidence in Germany's power to finally crush creatures like Maupassant. In moments of excitement she spoke almost as broad Saxon as Frau Professor herself, and I cannot refrain, for the benefit of those who know the dialect, from giving her

immortal words on that occasion: 'Ne, ich danke dir, so 'nen Dreck les' ich nich! da geniegt mer schon mei Shakespeare und mei Geede!' ('No, I thank thee, such filth will I not read. My Shakespeare and my Goethe suffice unto me.') Later I was to find out that this is the usual opinion in Germany of modern French literature, though seldom so forcibly expressed.

There was one more belonging to that household, a dear Swedish girl called Amanda Meyer, violinist and composer, who afterwards married Julius; and then for the first time I saw a charming blend of art and courtship very common in those days. Thus it must have been in Bach's time, thus with the old Röntgens, but I don't see how it can come off quite in the same way under modern conditions.

Thinking of differences between then and now, what most strikes me is the fact, that very often of an evening these families would combine to make music among themselves. Not only that, but on every other Sunday members of the quartett Papa Röntgen led, the 'cellist of which was his nephew Julius Klengel, would come to his flat and play all the afternoon. Sometimes of course they rehearsed one of their repertory numbers, but these meetings were mainly for the pleasure of making music. Then there was leisure in the world to love and practise art for its own sake, and that, that, is the tender grace of those dead days! . . .

Shortly before the war Kreisler told me a horrible thing; he said 'I have visited every town in the world, almost, of over 100,000 inhabitants, and of them all I know only the railway station, the hotel, and the concert hall.' I exclaimed it was a hideous, degrading life; why did he go on with it? He spoke of relations to support, financial crises, and so on; and when I uttered the German equivalent of 'bosh!' he replied: 'Yes, you are right; one gets into the groove and can't or won't get out of it.' . . . This is the sort of madness of which I wish the war would purge the world.

CHAPTER XVI

Winter 1877-1878

At the time I signed on as pupil of the Conservatorium, that institution was merely trading on its Mendelssohnian reputation, though of course we in England did not know that. The first person the neophyte would come into contact with was a horrible old doorkeeper, Castellan A., relic of the Golden Age, who refused to do even the smallest of his duties, such as deliver a letter, without a tip. Life was then on a scale that made a halfpenny a matter of long disputes between Frau Professor and her tradesmen, hence one penny was considered by our tyrant a satisfactory gratuity, but I never grudged a penny more bitterly. The real fountain of the universal slackness was of course the then Director, an old friend (?) of Mendelssohn's, who had reached the age when, in some natures, thoughts of duty cease from troubling, scruples are at rest, and nothing but emoluments and pleasures—and his pleasures were not well spoken of—are taken seriously.

The three masters I had to do with were Reinecke, conductor of the Gewandhaus Concerts, for composition; Jadassohn, a well-known writer of canons, for counterpoint and theory generally; and Maas for piano. The lessons with Reinecke were rather a farce; he was one of those composers who turn out music by the yard without effort or inspiration, the only emotion connected with them being the ever-boiling fury of his third wife—a tall, thin woman with a mop of frizzy black hair—at the world's preferring Brahms's music to that of her adored husband. There were always crowds of children prowling about the corridor of

his flat, and he was unable to conceal his polite indifference to our masterpieces, taking up his pen to resume his own before we had got to the door. Jadassohn's classes, held in the Conservatorium, were at least amusing, but equally farcical in instruction; their official length was forty minutes, and when he arrived, always a quarter of an hour late, it was to stand with his back to the stove for another ten minutes telling us exceedingly funny stories with the Jewish lisp I came to know so well in Germany. He diligently set us canons and other exercises, but there was seldom time even to look at the work we brought, much less correct our mistakes. Maas was a conscientious but dull teacher, and if Frau Schumann, when I came to know her later, used to say she didn't mind *hearing*, but couldn't bear to *look at* me playing, owing to the way I managed my hands, it was probably more my fault than his.

At first I was astonished at the lack of musical enthusiasm among my fellow students; gradually I came to realise these girls and boys had come there merely to qualify for teachers' certificates, and certainly whatever flame may have been in their bosoms to start with was bound to burn low in the atmosphere of superficiality and indifference our masters distilled. The glorious part was the rest of the music life, the concerts and the Opera. In modern Germany, and everywhere else except Austria, some special conductor, or the performance of some crack orchestra, is what attracts the public; people who will throng to hear M. A.'s quartett play anything and everything would not cross the street to hear the same works performed by any other four, all of which is the result of boom of course. But at Leipzig in those days you went simply to hear the music.

The twenty-two Gewandhaus concerts were conducted one and all by Reinecke, and though in other towns the custom of playing excerpts from Wagner had been started, such a thing was taboo in those sacred walls. Not even the overtures of his operas were tolerated, and I remember an all but successful attempt to bar the Siegfried Idyll.

This quite orthodox concert- piece was so ill-received, several of the permanent subscribers staying away to mark their indignation, that the experiment was not repeated. You could not call Reinecke an inspiring conductor, but at all events he let the music do its own business; there were no carefully thought out effects, no rushings and dawdlings, no ' Reinecke touches '; in short there was nothing between you and the thing itself, which is just the quality that moves one to the depths, as I said elsewhere, listening to Patti on the gramophone. I suppose jaded palates cannot get on without these artificial stimulants, but it was glorious, when I was in Vienna the winter before the war, to find a public too fresh and keen to need them.

What a curious place that old Gewandhaus was! Built, as its name ' Cloth-Hall ' indicates, for anything but music, and in defiance of all known laws of acoustics, its sonority was nevertheless perfect. Acoustics are queer things—so queer that, pondering them, imaginations run riot. An old gentleman from Magdeburg once told us how a door had been opened in the wall of some concert-room, to the complete destruction of its sonority. Horrified, the Town Council blocked up the door again *with the very same bricks*—' aber es nützte nichts—hin war die Akustik!' (it was of no use—the sonority was gone). In spite of the delicate touch about the bricks it had walked off in disgust to return no more. . . . The Gewandhaus tickets were almost all subscribed for, and only by intrigue or charity could you get one. But the rehearsals the day before were supposed to be the real thing, especially as they only cost 2s. and to us Conservatorists nothing at all Old ladies used to bring their knitting to the concerts in those days, an enchanting practice, as stimulating, I am sure, to æsthetic enjoyment as a cigarette; but it was put down as ' bourgeois ' in the smart new Concert Hall built three or four years later . . . alas! alas! . . .

The chamber music, in the beautiful ' Little Saal ' behind the other, was on the same lines, simple, sincere,

and run by local men; and as the Director of the Stadt Theater was that go-ahead old genius Angelo Neumann—a man who scented out talent as a pointer marks down game—and the orchestra practically the same as played in the Gewandhaus, the Opera was probably at its best then.

One chapter in an old-fashioned tale for children called 'The Story without an End' begins: 'As for the child he was lost in a dream of delight'; so it was with me during my first season in Leipzig. Great art joys may come to you in later life, but nothing can ever equal a first hearing of Beethoven's A Major Symphony, or Schubert's C Major Quintett, in the company of kindred spirits like the Röntgens and others then unknown to me—for my greatest musical friendship was yet to be. When the orchestra was tuning for my first Beethoven Symphony I remember trembling all over like a horse at covert side, and being far too agitated to note the themes.

In October Frau Schumann played at a Chamber Music Concert, and B. walked Place de Repos with a halo, for his was to be the privilege of turning over for her, she and his father being very old friends. Before a concert, being the most nervous of women, she habitually wept in the artists' room, declaring to the last moment she could not possibly go on to the platform; surely then a greater sacrifice to old friendship could not be imagined than associating herself in public with this near-sighted, abnormally clumsy youth. Of course the worst happened; at one moment the music was on Frau Schumann's knees, thence violently shot by her on to the floor, but mercifully there was no break in the performance. A very few months later I got to know her intimately; she was subject to rather lovable attacks of fury, just like a child, and was very funny on the subject of B. I thought of her years afterwards when attending one of Madame Lind-Goldschmidt's singing classes, in the course of which two pupils left the room in tears. The old school had no patience with stupidity.

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During the early part of the winter, an event happened which even now it almost turns me pale to think of, and oddly enough two scenes in the drama were played on the frozen pond of the Johannisthal. I was working terrifically hard, among other things practising the piano five hours daily, and had made rather friends with a flibberty-gibbet of a Swiss girl, a Miss Heimlicher, whom I persuaded to skate with me at the only hour that did not interfere with my work, before breakfast. There was also a certain young Englishman who paid me much attention, and even went so far, after I had fainted one day on the ice and come to with my head on his knee, as to propose marriage. If I mention the fact it is because it is pertinent to the story —not in a spirit of boasting; for I have always believed the two or three men who have thus honoured me knew perfectly well there was not the slightest danger of their being accepted, so were free to indulge in that priceless luxury of the young, an unrequited attachment.

One day Frau Professor said to me: ' It is a pity Fräulein Heimlicher associates so much with that Miss B., for she has a very bad reputation.' This was a clincher. I had already caught certain remarks in the Conservatorium, and felt that steps must be taken, so at last I told my friend what I had heard. She was much agitated and asked what she should do? Having, in spite of my folly, some rudiments of common sense, and an English dread of libel laws, I said: ' Say nothing, but gradually drop her.' My memory is categoric on that point. Miss Heimlicher thanked me profusely, said I was a true friend, and for a few days I saw nothing of her. . . The next thing was a lawyer's letter, handed in by an official, commanding my appearance in three weeks' time in Court, on a charge of libel brought against me by Miss B. ! . . .

Now it must be remembered that one of my father's reasons for refusing his consent to my leaving home was that he fancied I was a spendthrift, and that my mother's diamonds would one day have to be sold to pay my debts; also that my allowance was only just sufficient to meet my

needs. I knew the terrific penalties enforced in English libel cases, and for an hour or two my heart seemed continually on the point of ceasing to beat. I turned over in my mind what was to be done, whose advice could be asked. Either because I did not know her well enough, or from pride, or some other reason, I ruled out Frau Röntgen and eventually, knowing he was a kind shrewd old fellow, I confided in Jadassohn. 'You must have a lawyer,' he said. A lawyer! where was the fee to come from? But Jadassohn had a good friend, one Ernst Meyer, a devilish clever fellow; he would give me a line to him saying I was his pupil, and the cost would be nothing to speak of, half a crown perhaps but not more. He looked up the address, off I started, rang a bell, and was ushered into the office of the most odious, inhuman, filthy old scoundrel I ever beheld. Alas! though kindness itself, Jadassohn was more than casual, and there being about twenty Ernst Meyers in the address book, several of whom were in the legal profession, he had picked out the wrong one, as I found out when it was too late! This repellant person read the letter and must certainly have known there was a mistake somewhere, but merely enquired what my business was, informed me I had not a leg to stand on, and would I please hand over ten marks to start with? I had only six with me, gave him five of these on account, and after certain notes were taken, asked anxiously what sort of penalty was to be expected? With an icy-cold indifference, for which I hope he is now burning elsewhere, he replied: 'Impossible to say; anything from a hundred to a thousand marks. Good morning.'

A hundred to a thousand marks! that is from £5 to £50! I walked out of that office as near despair as I have ever been in my life, and determined to go for advice to our Director. The old monster received me more in sorrow than in anger, said he had heard of this distressing matter, and that it was a terrible thing to blast the fair fame of one of his children (for thus, so I was told, he looked upon all the 300 of us). Painful though it might be, he feared

I deserved the lesson I was about to receive, and that Justice must run her course; it was not for him to interfere. . . .

What next? . . . I collected my 'grandeurs' (a few lockets and an old watch) told the whole story to my admirer, pressed a parcel into his hands, and besought him to sell the contents for me. Next day he produced about £3, feared it was very little, but assured me he had done his best. Years afterwards, having acquired knowledge of market values, I came to the conclusion that if he got 10s. for the lot he did wonders, and that the balance must have come out of his own slender pocket.

My next move was quite fantastic. Among the skaters was a nice-looking man about thirty, who I somehow found out was a lawyer, and actually counsel for the plaintiff! I forthwith introduced myself, and no doubt to his intense astonishment and amusement, begged his advice on my sad case. He was very kind and sympathetic, and finally said: 'You must have heard this report from someone else; well, if that person won't come forward you are perfectly entitled to name him or her as your authority, and there's an end of the thing as far as you are concerned.' As a matter of fact I *had* just mentioned the subject of responsibility to Frau Professor, but was met with such floods of tears, and such implorings not to take the bread out of the mouth of a widow, that I was remorseful for having spoken. So I thanked the lawyer and said I did not see my way to taking the course he suggested.

My final action, as the dreaded Day of Judgment approached, was probably better inspired than I realised at the time; I wrote, and delivered with my own hand at his door, a letter to the Director, saying I had no money to pay a large fine, should certainly not borrow, but go to prison; all I asked of him was not to let the matter get to the ears of my parents, &c., &c. No doubt the letter was melodramatic and ridiculous, but the old wretch must have felt it was sincere and been rather alarmed at the turn things were taking, for as I afterwards found out, Miss B.

was more or less under his protection. Whether he intervened or not I never knew of course, but when I arrived at the Court—not, as I anticipated, a huge place thronged with an expectant public, but merely a dingy room up a back street, in which were neither the plaintiff nor her counsel but just a few stray lawyers—I was told that if I wrote a becoming apology, expressing my belief in the spotless character of the young lady, and paid the costs, all would be forgiven and forgotten. Who shall blame me if under the circumstances, though with inward groanings that cannot be uttered, I put my name to the required lie? In the end the £3 saw me about half way through the whole business, but it was quite the worst nightmare of my life. I may add that the friendship with Miss Heimlicher died a natural death, and that soon after, though I think no one knew what had happened, Miss B. disappeared from the scene.

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Long afterwards, in fact early in the present century, I learned that my kindly young Englishman had taken Holy Orders—of course!—and eventually become Head Master of a very flourishing preparatory school. Finding to my surprise that one of my nephews was being educated there, I asked in a fit of sentimental curiosity what kind of person the Head was? 'Oh, just the usual sort of beast,' replied my nephew, and with mingled feelings of awe and disgust he then learned that the beast might have been his uncle.

CHAPTER XVII

Winter 1877-1878

By this time I had separated the wheat of instruction from the chaff, and evolved a reasonable Plan of Hours. My only friends were still the Röntgens, a state of things that suited me exactly, for I knew well the condition of perfect liberty is being absolutely unknown. Nevertheless one day shortly before Christmas I at last put on a pair of tidy gloves, and getting myself up to look as English and conventional as possible, went to call upon Frau Dr. Brockhaus, the only person I had a letter of introduction to. Doubts had been cast on the value of this introduction by my parents, inasmuch as it had been given me by Mary Schwabe's mother-in-law, the celebrated philanthropist Madame Schwabe, who held Queens and Empresses in the hollow of her hand, who swept everyone she met into the whirlpool of her activities, and who had hypnotised me into giving a concert at Camberley, shortly before my departure for Germany, in aid of some Institution of hers at Naples. And as I have said the family of Schwabe was not in favour at Frimhurst just then. It turned out, however, that Frau Dr. Brockhaus was one of the great ladies of Leipzig, and I was most cordially welcomed there, this delightful house eventually becoming my home during my first winter abroad. Oddly enough, on the occasion of a second visit I met a Neapolitan scoffer, who declared that the main object of Madame

Schwabe's Institution at Naples was to persuade the boys who dive for pennies in the Bay of Naples to wear swimming drawers; but this, Frau Doctor explained, was not to be taken seriously.

Herr Dr. Brockhaus, head of the firm, was a melancholy, stiffly Saxon, orthodox personality, whose one adventure must have been the selection of a fiery Hungarian Jewess years younger than himself for his life's partner. Torn between worldly and artistico-intellectual instincts, Frau Doctor had, I think, never quite decided what her true bent was, but at that time, two of her sons being of marriageable age, the line was Society mitigated with a sprinkling of the Serious. Her first kind action as far as I was concerned was inviting me to assist at a German Christmas under her roof. I confess that to this day I have not made up my mind as to the merits of that great institution. People began to look pale and careworn about it early in December, and spent half January recovering from exhaustion. Where there are crowds of very young children it may be worth all this fuss, but on the whole I prefer other manifestations of German thoroughness.

Immediately after the festival Frau Doctor went off to their country place near Dresden—ostensibly on business but probably to recoup—and declared it was her intention to institute herself my mentor on her return, and introduce me into the World. The next great festival, seeing the Old Year out, was celebrated by me at the Röntgens. We had a grand feast, with sweet champagne in very long, narrow glasses that held nothing, *pâté de foie gras*, and hot punch—a red essence of some unknown alcoholic derivation, mixed to one's taste with boiling water. I noticed as on many subsequent occasions that Frau Röntgen, whose digestion was magnificent, picked all the truffles out of her helping of *foie gras* and put them on her husband's plate—a proceeding that dear man took quite as a matter of course. After supper we all sang part-songs in which I was tenor, when not bass, and it was remarked by Papa Röntgen that the more punch was

drunk the more I pushed up the pitch—an interesting effect of alcohol which makes one think that to hand it round before certain *a cappella* pieces at concerts would be a good plan. On that day Julius and Amanda became officially engaged, and I had my first wondering view of untrammelled German demonstrativeness.

During these months, as most of my associates knew not one word of English, I had been making good progress with German. I have always found that understanding a foreign language as spoken is far more difficult than learning to speak it myself—a common experience, I daresay, of talkative and forthcoming people; and by way of practice, as well as from love of the theatre, had at once started a custom of going continually to the play, especially on Saturdays and Sundays, when there were performances in the Old Theatre, at reduced prices, of the classics, and also of certain well-known box-office trumps, such as 'La Dame aux Camélias,' and 'Adrienne Lecouvreur.' I used to buy the text in a twopenny edition, get it up thoroughly beforehand, and install myself in the first row of stalls where I drank in every word. Shakespeare was always in the repertory, including plays seldom performed, such as 'Coriolanus,' 'Cymbeline,' etc.; and once I saw the three parts of Henry VI. squeezed into two, and Richard III. played on successive nights. Gradually I came to know all the possible and some of the impossible plays of Goethe, Lessing, Schiller, Racine, and even one or two of Calderon, and these Sunday performances were always crammed.

I must have been very innocent, or perhaps only very stupid at that period, for I wondered what on earth the heavy father in 'La Dame aux Camêlias' meant when he said his son's *liaison* with Marguérite could not possibly result in the 'founding of a family,' or words to that effect. Having only a vague idea of what exactly the relation was, I puzzled my head over that conundrum for two or three years at least—what the French call looking for midday at fourteen o'clock. . . . On the whole I fear it was a case of stupidity rather than innocence, for the great question

of sex was a constant preoccupation. But I would rather have died than discuss it with any living soul.

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There are one or two incidents in one's past to think of which fills one with self-loathing. In another place I spoke of such an incident connected with a governess's false chignon; but then I was a child of ten and had been deceived, whereas when the story I am about to relate happened, I was a grown-up maiden whom no one had deceived; it was merely that ignorance had led me where ignorance does lead the young. When the small crash came, the proper course would have been the one I recommended to Miss Heimlicher in the libel business—to do nothing and just let the matter drop; but this policy comes hard to some people at all ages, and though in the Protestant upbringing of youth truthfulness is so strongly inculcated, we are never taught that 'toute vérité n'est pas bonne à dire!' This is the only excuse I can offer for this regrettable occurrence, which is as follows.

In all these plays the actress who took the tragic sympathetic parts was one Marie Geistinger, whose career appealed to me to start with. She had been a very celebrated Operette singer, and if not actual creator of the rôle, was a specially brilliant 'Belle Hélène'; also, though of course I did not know this, her success in a sister career had been phenomenal, Archdukes, Grand Dukes, and great nobles of all nationalities competing for her favours. She must have been a plucky and energetic woman, for when her voice began to go, and with it her celebrated slimness, she vanished for two or three years, to reappear on the stage as tragic actress. She was at that time over fifty, had a very fine stage presence, and was a tremendous favourite with the public. I have no idea how the really knowledgeable classed her, but to me, young, inexperienced, and stage-struck, she was the ideal embodiment of all the heroines I loved and pitied, and who were more real to me than most living people, such as Maria Stuart, Adrienne, Phèdre, Hermione (in 'Winter's Tale') and others. In

short I was quite mad about the Geistinger, and after the performances, used to stand for long half hours in snow or slush to see her muffled form shoot out of the stage door into her fly. At last I took to buying little bunches of violets or roses and bribing the stage door-keeper to put them in her dressing-room, with my name and a few words of impassioned admiration on a card.

This went on for quite a long time, and at last one happy day I was given a note from ' the gracious lady ' saying she was much touched by my attentions, and would like to thank me in person, naming a day and hour at which I should find her at such and such an address. The last was an unnecessary detail, for countless times, with skates in my hand—she lived on the way to the Johannisthal—had I walked up her stairs and past her door to leave fictitious notes on imaginary persons on the floor above, but alas! without ever having had the luck to meet her. When the great day came, as I rang her bell it seemed my trembling knees must surely betray my agitation to the servant.

I don't think I have said that except in the very smartest set, the family always occupied a room called ' the living room ' in contradistinction to the real drawing-room, kept for grand occasions and familiarly known as ' die gute Stube ' (the good room). This was always a cold and forbidding apartment, the stove being seldom lit, with highly polished floor and chairs arranged geometrically round the walls. Opposite the door, on a smart bit of carpet, would be a table with plush cover, a square of crochet work and a flower-pot in the centre, behind which, jammed up against the wall, was the state sofa; and the hostess's first words invariably were: ' Bitte setzen Sie sich auf's Sofa!' (' Please to seat yourself upon the sofa '). I was ushered into the ' gute Stube,' and without any delay the object of my adoration appeared, followed by a shy young man whom she introduced as her husband; and down we two women sat on the sofa.

Then began the most banal of all banal conversations

I have ever taken part in. The Geistinger had needlework of some kind—a paralysing fact to start with—and no doubt was at her wit's end, poor thing, what to say to this adoring English girl, whose German at that time was far from fluent. As for me, the shock of seeing Maria Stuart at close quarters, in a tight-fitting dark blue satin bodice covered with spangles, rouged up to the eyes, and wearing a fluffy light wig, produced a commotion in my breast as when the tide turns against a strong wind. The husband hovered uneasily in the background, till told somewhat sharply to sit down, which he did, still very far off; but through it all I clung to the memory of the passionate emotions of the theatre, and when asked to admire a little white dog of some odious, fluffy, yapping breed, it was painful to have to say I only liked big dogs.

This however was a blessing in disguise, for a quite animated discussion about the disadvantages of big dogs in towns ensued, whereas up to that moment we really and truly had talked about the weather like embarrassed people in books. When it was time to go I was graciously invited to come again, and any slight feeling of disappointment was put down to knowing that in my overpowering shyness I had cut rather a poor figure. True, on reflection, this greatest of great ladies on the stage seemed, in real life, strangely unlike any lady I had ever met, but to dwell on this thought was distasteful; indeed the great difficulty to people of a certain temperament is to admit the evidence of their senses, once the imagination has been thoroughly stirred. One won't see, won't hear, won't believe. . . .

After a decent interval I went to see her again, and yet again. As I now perceive, she belonged to the large class of actresses who literally have not an idea in their heads beyond the theatre, and oh! how distinctly I remember noticing, in spite of my infatuation, that even in the plays she took part in, nothing interested her except her own rôle—a trait common to most *prime donne* I was to meet with later on. But I got over this somehow, and though a determination to believe in her hair and complexion had

to be abandoned, I got over that too, and our friendship, begun in the autumn, went on well into the New Year, though rather haltingly. Strange to say Frau Doctor, who in some ways was very innocent, and whose conventionality was pleasantly inconsistent, did not remonstrate. But remonstrance was to come!

Among the grandees she introduced me to after Christmas were the Tauchnitz family, inventors of the Tauchnitz Edition, he—a German of course—being English Consul. Here also I was more than kindly received, and when it turned out that his friend Lor-r-rd Napier of Magdala was a connection and beloved old friend of my parents there was great enthusiasm, and Frau Doctor must have sighed a sigh of relief. I at once succumbed to the charms of his very pretty and intensely kind daughter-in-law, who like all Tauchnitzes had a fair knowledge of English manners and customs. She had heard, and been greatly amused about, my passion for the Geistinger, but was wholly unprepared for the news that we were on visiting terms. I remember her horrified face as she said: 'Aber Kind, ganz gewiss würde so eine Freundschaft Ihrer lieben Frau Mama sehr unlieb sein!' ('But child, I am sure your dear Frau Mama would greatly disapprove of such a friendship.') And then, with infinite discretion, she proceeded to lift the veil, Grand Dukes and all. It appeared that the young man really was a husband of sorts, only in that world you married, divorced, and married again as often as you pleased. In this particular case two or three husbands had been tried and found wanting, the poor lady's instinct being evidently to settle down, but not, not with an elderly admirer. In the end I quite allowed the acquaintance must be dropped, but unfortunately the only course which commended itself to me was to write and say so; which I did, adding that *if she reflected on her past life she would understand why!* I am thankful to say I got no reply to this odious letter, indeed I had begged there might be none —a cowardly touch added to the rest.

It is to be feared that in those days I admitted no line of conduct, no principles, except those in which I had been brought up, and unrepentant sinners filled me with pharisaical indignation. Thinking over this incident I have often wished one could be certain the Geistinger felt not the slightest pang about it, only amusement. It is more than likely . . . but I regret that letter even more than the chignon business.

CHAPTER XVIII

Early in 1878

Early in January came the event to which, ever since its advance announcement by Henschel in Friedrichsroda, everything else had seemed but a prelude, the arrival of Brahms in Leipzig to conduct his new Symphony in D Major. Henschel turned up from Berlin at the same time, and from him I gathered that at the extra rehearsals, to which we outsiders were not admitted, there had been a good deal of friction. Brahms, as I found out later, for Henschel would have been far too loyal to admit it, was not only an indifferent conductor, but had the knack of rubbing orchestras up the wrong way. Moreover with one or two exceptions—notably Röntgen, once an opponent but now an enthusiastic admirer—the Gewandhaus musicians were inclined to be antagonistic to his music, and indeed considered the performance of any new work whatsoever an act of condescension. As for Brahms, accustomed to the brilliant quality of Viennese orchestras, which was to entrance me equally when I came to know them, he found his own race, the North Germans, cold and sticky, and let them feel it.

Henschel also informed me the great man was staying, as usual, with Heinrich von Herzogenberg, director of the Bach Verein, whose beautiful wife, about whom the Röntgens were for ever raving, was said to be the most gifted musician and fascinating being ever met or heard of; Brahms had more than once remarked that, but for

her, he would never set foot in Leipzig at all. To my mingled delight and horror I learned, too, that Henschel had actually spoken to him about my work, telling him I had never studied, that he really ought to look at it and so on; and after the general rehearsal this good friend clutched and presented me all unawares. At that time Brahms was clean shaven, and in the whirl of emotion I only remember a strong alarming face, very penetrating bright blue eyes, and my own desire to sink through the floor when he said, as I then thought by way of compliment, but as I now know in a spirit of scathing irony: 'So this is the young lady who writes sonatas and doesn't know counterpoint!' I afterwards learned that Henschel had left a MS. of mine (two songs) with him, that he subsequently looked at them, and remarked to Frau Röntgen that evidently Henschel had written them himself!

I saw him again during that week, but as all my reliable impressions of him belong to a later period, when I came to know him well, it is safer to speak here of the Symphony, which, though it deeply impressed me, left me a little bewildered. I had yet to learn that only a conductor of genius—for preference not the composer, except in very rare cases—can produce a new orchestral work intelligibly; at that time too the idiom of Brahms was unfamiliar, and doubtless the rendering lacked conviction. One thing I well remember, that on this occasion I first realised exactly how much critics grasp of a new work not yet available in print. The great Leipzig Extinguisher, after making the usual complaints as to lack of melody, excess of learning, and general unsatisfactoriness, remarked: 'About half way through the very tedious first movement there is one transient gleam of light, a fairly tuneful passage for horns.' He had noticed this was the recurring first theme, which had already appeared for those self-same horns in the second bar!! . . .

The Röntgens, Klengels, etc., who were full of enthusiasm for the Symphony, had been asked to meet Brahms at the Herzogenbergs, and I heard more and more about the

wonderful 'Frau Lisl' whom I wondered if I should ever meet, for they said she detested society and saw no one but a handful of intimates.

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Meanwhile I had discovered that living 'en pension' was unnecessary extravagance, and determined to go into rooms—a plan Frau Professor took in excellent part. This time luck was emphatically on my side. Next door to Frau Doctor Brockhaus, who lived in the Salomonstrasse—one of the new residential streets on the other side of the town, all big houses with wooded gardens—I had often noticed a picturesque, French-looking old house, two storied, with tiled roof and dormer windows, standing well back in its ramshackle grounds. One day, lo and behold! I saw hanging on the paling a little board with the device 'möblirte Zimmer' (furnished rooms), and the end of it was that I took up my abode there on February 1, 1878.

My new landlady, Frau Brandt, was a nice but very untidy woman with a howling mob of children. There was only one room at my disposal, and that with the wrong aspect too—a point I had learned to take interest in; but as I had fallen head over ears in love with the house and knew it was to pass into other hands in the summer, I decided to put up with everything, provided satisfactory arrangements could be made for the future.

I don't think I have yet said what perhaps goes without saying, that it was always understood that I should pass the long vacation—in other words the summer—at home; also that Papa and certain relations had been confident that the desire to live abroad, being merely a whim, would not survive my first winter. By this time, however, they were disillusioned on that point and not surprised to hear I was deep in domiciliary plans for the autumn. The incoming people were interviewed, and finding we suited each other perfectly, I secured the promise of two rooms I had set my heart on and settled down contentedly for the time being in Pandemonium.

As I only spent four months in the single room with the wrong aspect, I will describe my lodgings and my manner of life generally as they were in the following autumn, and during the rest of the time I lived in that fascinating eighteenth-century house.

An ingenious system was arranged between my landlady and myself, under which I ate my midday meal either with the family or at a restaurant, according to the way my day was planned; but I invariably had supper in my own room. I would buy a quarter of a pound of cold ham and some butter (a store of beer was always in the corner of my sitting-room), and there, when I came home after a concert or the theatre, I found the table ready laid with a hunk of black bread on it. The outside wall sloped about half way up, and my larder was a new birdcage, resting, among wild vine leaves, on the rain-gutter below the dormer windows, and leaning crazily against the roof. There were adventures with cats, but the birdcage defeated them. On the other side of the house, separating the front garden from the road, was a seven-foot wooden paling, made of uprights and cross bars, the gate in which was locked by law at 11 P.M., but it was of the sort an agile person who has forgotten the huge rusty latchkey could climb, in spite of the spikes. Sometimes there would be belated passers-by or a policeman; if so one walked on up a side street and returned when the coast was clear. When I came to know the smart people, nothing astonished them more than that this feat was performed on an average two or three times a month.

It was of course quite unusual for girls of my class either to go to restaurants or walk about the streets alone at night, and at first friends used to implore me to let a servant see me home; but neither that, nor any other curtailment of my liberty, would I permit. Only once was I spoken to by a strange man in Germany, and remember insisting on the fact to Charlie Hunter, who remarked that was surely nothing to boast about.

Reflecting on it all I am astonished to think how calmly,

on the whole, my Mentor, now my neighbour, took my proceedings. In the depths of her southern soul was a secret strain of Bohemianism which the rigours of bourgeois life in a particularly conventional North German town had not wholly eradicated; probably she felt too, that though I really did my best to please her on side issues, there was nothing to be done with the ground plan. I know that often when I asked her advice she would say in a tragi-comic voice: 'Was nützt's dass ich dir einen Rath gebe? folgen wirst du doch nicht!' ('What's the use of giving you advice? I know you won't follow it!') Moreover she was clever enough to see that though the 'nice people,' by way of explaining their indulgence to her *protégée*, were for ever reminding each other feverishly that I was English (a card I played, alas, poor England! for all it was worth), as a matter of fact I met with more than tolerance, and but for the circumstances that nothing really counted for me but my work, should have been in a fair way to become terribly spoiled. My little song 'Rothraut,' sung with a strong English accent, had a great success everywhere, and the Brockhaus boys presented me with a black velvet student's cap lined with red silk, round which were embroidered in gold and scarlet the music and words of the first line. I still have this treasure, which moths have respected, and of course adored the music-ridden German nation more than ever.

Invitations to balls—a great temptation—poured in, and as I had left all my finery in England there were anxious confabulations with Frau Doctor (who wished me to do her credit) followed by endless letters to mother, full of ingenious and economical suggestions on the toilette question. The worst of all this gaiety was that the candle was now being burned at both ends, but kind Frau Doctor was, I fancy, too interested in my social career to grasp that fact; anyhow I cannot recall her advising me to put the brake on.

CHAPTER XIX

Early in 1878

By this time I was beginning to get some idea of social conditions in Leipzig and noticed there was a fairly sharp division between three main classes—the Burgher Aristocracy (or worldly), the Professorial set, and the Artists.

To begin with the first; its kernel was the ' Gewandhaus Gesellschaft,' a group of about forty leading families, not necessarily wealthy, who had intermarried for generations and owned most of the woodland villages round Leipzig. It was governed by intricate laws like the ancient guilds, and nobles were excluded from membership. Among these burgher patricians patriarchal customs prevailed; in the town married sons and their families generally occupied upper floors of the paternal dwelling, which as often as not was in the same building as their business. In the summer the whole party migrated to the country house (always within easy reach of the town), and while ' der Bappa ' and ' die Mamma ' inhabited the ' Schloss '—generally a pleasant, homely erection no more like a castle than is many a French ' château '—the young people were dotted about the grounds in not very tasteful villas. This world had the defects and virtues of all provincial society, and although, as I have indicated, they made kindly allowances for strangers, among themselves their manners were stiff and their ideas rather narrow, always excepting a certain leading family I shall introduce by-and-by.

The rural aristocracy (Land Adel) played no great

part in Leipzig society, but later on I saw some of them in their own preserves and found them more like ourselves than the burgher patricians. In fact one realised, as that fierce rule of the Gewandhaus Gesellschaft I quoted indicates, that the two classes had kept strictly aloof till quite recent times, with no such medium as our English gentry—blessed result of the open-aristocracy system—to bridge the gulf. The Gewandhaus set was frequented by the military—Generals of 1870, for instance, in slightly patronising mood and smothered with orders, whose wives gave themselves amazing airs; also by stray members of the Land Adel dotted about the country round Leipzig, who occasionally deigned to mix with the rich bourgeois and drink their champagne. You even met sprigs of Royalty in course of being laboriously coached for their degrees by obsequious professors . . . betweenwhiles seeing life under the guidance of our young swells. Despite the pride of class that I so much admired in the old Leipzig families, much fuss was made over these visitors from a higher sphere.

As for the Professors and their belongings—a group stiff with intellectual pretension, whose exaggerated display of mutual respect masked mutual hatred and jealousy I have never seen equalled—these I detested at first sight and after one or two essays kept out of their way for ever more. My initiation into this world—a 'Professoren-Ball' to which Frau Doctor got me an invitation—is one of the fantastic experiences of my life. Imagine the guests of a Lambeth Palace Garden Party of thirty years ago suddenly ordered at a moment's notice to appear for the first time in their lives in a ballroom. . . . There were stuff gowns turned in at the neck in a V with a bit of lace sewn in; there were black trousers worn beneath grey waistcoats; there were gaudy students' jackets besmeared with stains from the restaurant; and, worst of all, tubs were evidently unknown in the intellectual world. Maidens writhed with archness and never ceased giggling, young men bowed, scraped, and declaimed, flourishing their arms

about, and at one moment I found myself dancing the Lancers opposite a youth whose hair was half-way down his back, who wore someone else's swallow-tail coat, and who was cutting elaborate capers such as a gorgeous Highlander might have envied, in a pair of double-soled boots covered with mud! . . . The elegance of the really great world is incontestable everywhere; once, when I had a fugitive glimpse of a peasant's ball in the Bavarian Highlands, with its beautiful national costumes, long pipes, and unaffected jollity, I asked myself, as I do now, why, between Paul Veronese and Jan Steen, must there be this vast tract of senseless, hybrid commonness? . . .

And yet the professor tribe frisking in ballrooms is more sympathetic than pontificating at dinner tables and in drawing-rooms. Needless to say there were remarkable men among them, people of European reputation whom it was interesting to watch, but not one single remarkable woman. There is a phrase for ever on German female lips that used to irritate me: 'Mein Mann sagt . . .' ('my husband says . . .'), but as uttered by the ignorant, arrogant wives of these infallible ones it is the least attractive side of German life in a nutshell. In fact the general atmosphere of the Professoren-Kreise[1] (I am speaking figuratively—not alluding to their ballrooms) was unbreathable.

The Artists who, as goes without saying, were my chief associates, were sometimes to be found wandering about forlorn in the circles of Professordom, but they professed and sincerely felt unmitigated contempt for the worldlings, and were seldom if ever met in their haunts. As stranger and Engländerin—and in those days Germans had a sneaking respect for English freedom of spirit, and above all for English table-manners—I was admitted to all these various groups, and confess it was delightful to meet again among the rich burghers certain habits of life one was accustomed to, but might vainly hope to find elsewhere in Leipzig—things like tubs, horses, and tennis, for instance.

[1] Professorial Circles; thus they describe themselves.

Even to have the door opened by a smart footman was not without its appeal; and when some of my artist friends wondered how anyone could care to frequent such frivolous society I would stolidly reply: 'In my father's house are many mansions'—a phrase which, in the German equivalent, 'in meines Vater's Haus sind viele Wohnungen,' lends itself with very comic effect to a strong English accent and for that reason had a great success. It is almost impossible for a young artist to avoid being narrowed in matters artistic by his own set, but socially I have always held firmly to a profound, hereditary conviction that it takes all sorts to make a world.

Later on I found that the snobbism of rank and wealth is of course the same in Dresden and Berlin as in London or other capitals, but the one type you never met at Leipzig was the International Smart. I could name twenty such, labelled English, French, German, or Italian, as the case may be, who wear the same clothes, think the same thoughts, and are practically identical; such of course never dreamed of coming to Leipzig, hence you could there study German burgher life in a state of comparative purity.

In all the different groups mentioned the particularist feeling was sure to crop up sooner or later. Stray Prussians were perpetually having digs at the Saxons whom they considered servile, false, and rather stupid. The Saxons, for their part, cordially hated the Prussians, but also feared them; for which reason, not being a race distinguished for moral courage, their sentiments were only revealed in an outburst or in confidence. Some of the Saxon turns of speech certainly tend to give their own case away; for instance an adjective I have never heard elsewhere is 'hinterrücksch,' used to qualify people who take malevolent action behind your back; and a real good old Leipzig joke is to say, if someone disappears without apparent reason from the circle, 'He must have taken offence at something!' But their most characteristic phrase is one that prefaces any remark whatsoever which, if repeated, might have unpleasant consequences: 'ich will

nichts gesagt haben!'—whereby you are warned that if necessary the remark will be disavowed. Farther than this caution cannot go! Still, as soon as I became capable of distinguishing, I infinitely preferred the kindly, humane, homely Saxons to the overbearing Prussians, particularly after a winter spent in Berlin.

From the very first dialect interested me—a matter which can be only studied to a very limited extent among the educated in our islands; thus I soon mastered the varieties and found out what a soul-revealing medium it is. To speak of only a few blatant instances, the Prussian dialect is harsh, clean-cut, and uncompromising; the Bavarian, though easy-going and good-natured on the surface, suggests fathomless depths of brutality below; whereas through the Austrian turn of speech—careless, fascinating, and slightly nasal—there gleams at its worst a cold, smiling, rather Oriental cruelty as unlike brutality as the East is unlike the West. But in the peculiar language spoken in Leipzig, including diction, intonation, and every imaginable harmonic, there is a deliberate wallowing in the inesthetic, a cult of the ungraceful, of which Leipzigers themselves are quite conscious though few emancipate themselves wholly from its thraldom. And no one reviles the Saxon dialect more mercilessly than travelled Saxons.

. . . . . .

Meanwhile, in whatever set I might happen to find myself, three names were constantly on all lips, uttered with respect, admiration, or devotion, as the case might be. Hitherto for various reasons I had met none of these evidently remarkable personalities; then suddenly Fate made good, and in the course of a single week Livia Frege, Lili Wach, and Elisabeth von Herzogenberg swam into my orbit.

When you whisper certain names to yourself a cathedral lights up in the dark recesses of memory, and all who knew her would agree that the name Livia Frege is one of these. In her youth she had been a very celebrated concert singer, and some of Mendelssohn's and Schumann's finest songs

are dedicated to ' Livia Gerhardt '; now, on the threshold of old age, she was a great lady, but also the simplest-hearted, warmest friend of every true artist in the place. One of these women born to the purple, with the prestige of a glorious artistic past thrown in, there was a sheer lovableness about her that I partly ascribe to the bluest, most eternally youthful eyes ever seen. She had married when very young a Leipzig banker and left the concert room for ever; some say nothing short of this renunciation would satisfy the burgher-patrician parents-in-law, but to separate Livia Frege from music was beyond anyone's power.

I first met her in the sort of State Box over the orchestra in the old Gewandhaus, which, though other mortals in part owned it, was always called the ' Frege Loge.' She had heard of me from the Röntgens, and when someone told this Queen that in the little basket I hung on a peg in that sacred box was a parcel of cold ham, she replied according to legend: ' And pray why not?' in a manner that rolled the would-be mischief-maker out flat. Livia had once been a very poor young artist herself, but perhaps her interlocutor had forgotten the fact. Though stately to a degree, and prejudiced in an old-fashioned pleasant way, she took me at once into her good graces, told me to call her ' Du ' and ' Frau Livia,' and I am certain had pleasure in the adoration it was impossible even for the old and cold, let alone the young and hot, to help lavishing on her.

She was very religious, not in the alternately blatant and gushing style affected by many pious Germans and hall-marked by the Hohenzollerns, but with absolute simplicity. On the subject of evil communications corrupting good manners she was particularly strong, and once told me she had never listened to a Wagner opera because she wished to keep herself ' musically pure.' Said as she said it, and given her past, this was not in the least unsympathetic; it fitted in somehow with her gentle, serious idealism, which again was saved from sentimentality by a gift of pealing laughter that made heavy-minded admirers stare. So beautiful, so dignified,

almost an old woman, and yet able to nearly die of laughing like the very young! I used to note the beauty in her face and voice when she spoke of Mendelssohn, who, with his wife, had been of her most intimate friends. A world that since then had begotten Brahms, not to speak of Wagner, was growing contemptuous of its former idol, and she was aware of the fact, but did not consider it necessary even to discuss the matter. No insistence on his merit, no apology—just the old love and faith. I thought this attitude wonderful, but to carry it through you had to be Livia of the light-holding sapphire eyes.

Years after her death H. B. once said casually: 'Ah yes—Frau Frege—she was Mendelssohn's mistress, wasn't she?' Recovered from the shock of realising that even in a world as mad as ours such a legend could have a second's life, we began inventing analogous questions, such as 'Didn't S. Theresa elope with Ignatius Loyola?' or 'Wasn't George Sand Musset's grandmother?' etc., etc., but to those who knew my old Leipzig friend nothing as fantastic as the original proposition can be coined.

Frau Livia had a weakness for princes, which fact was commented on sarcastically by some of the worldlings and may have secretly troubled simple-minded humbler friends. But as these never found themselves neglected because of the Royalties where was the harm? To the market of life this highly inbred race brings a quite special contribution, to take no interest in which is surely not a sign of superiority; indeed one can say of Royalty what has been said of God, that if it did not exist it would have to be invented. The proof is that again and again it has been swept away . . . to be re-instated by succeeding generations; and so I hope and believe it will be to the end of time.

Many a young musician used to be given a preliminary canter at Frau Livia's house before a select audience, and it was on the first of these occasions attended by me that I met the two other bright jewels in Leipzig's crown.

Lili Wach was the only absolutely normal and satis-

factory specimen I have ever met of a much-to-be-pitied *genus*, the children of celebrated personalities; she was Mendelssohn's youngest daughter, and judging by their portraits must have been more like her Christian mother than her Jewish father. Yet both the delicately cut profile and soul to match had a touch of Israel at its best, and she used to say: 'Make allowance for Jewish caution!' when a certain shrinking from positive statements held back the emphatic 'Yes' or 'No' demanded. She was very musical, but being her father's daughter and extremely reserved by nature she kept the fact so dark that few people knew it.

Her husband, a distinguished Prussian lawyer, was notoriously musical. One of the most interesting men I have ever met, he was also, as I realised later, a typical modern German in many respects. Yet not in all, for though Professor of Jurisprudence at the Leipzig University and terrifically learned, there was not the faintest touch of pedantry about him—a fact which privately scandalised some of his Saxon colleagues. Man of action and politician he was suspected of aiming at high honours in the Prussian bureaucracy, and it was the fashion to question the sincerity of his religious convictions which were of the Hohenzollern brand; but being fond of him I put this down to jealousy. One day, however, at a funeral from a friend's house, where the usual speechifying round the coffin was led by the pastor in the orthodox inflated style—a style even cultivated people accept as the proper thing—what was my astonishment at hearing Wach hold forth in exactly the same key! . . . Wach, of all critics of other men's oratory the most pitiless! Since then, having re-read the Book of Joshua, and grasped that the rôle of God in the Prussian world-scheme is identical with that of Jehovah in the Wars of Israel, it seems likely that Wach, an ambitious man, deliberately poured sincere convictions into this particular mould. That is why he was a typical figure. Otherwise the most spontaneous of beings, warm-hearted, tempestuous, and brimming with sense of humour, his

wife would plead with gentle irony that there was enough violence, vitality, and definite assertion in the house without her emerging from her shell.

My friendship with Lili Wach was destined to become only second to the still closer relation I am about to speak of. As for Wach, who had a great reputation as mountaineer, his wife always maintained it was natural that we should have taken to each other at first sight, being chips of the same block. His theories on large families, which I have confessed to sharing, were ultimately her death, she being far too frail for child-bearing on the scale he insisted on. But I loved these too numerous children, in whose eyes, because of clambering over the paling (and later on because of a big dog of mine) I became a sort of legendary figure, and with whom I kept up a warm friendship that only the war interrupted.

CHAPTER XX

Early in 1878

And now, if these memoirs were a Masque, I should bid the musicians and electricians conspire with me to usher on becomingly the last and best beloved of my trio of L's—Lisl, otherwise Elisabeth von Herzogenberg.

The published correspondence between her and Brahms, and also various references to her in his Biography, have given the world some idea of the personality of this remarkable woman, in whose house I became what he always called me, 'the child,' till Fate violently and irrevocably parted us. At the time I first met her she was twenty-nine, not really beautiful but better than beautiful, at once dazzling and bewitching; the fairest of skins, fine-spun, wavy golden hair, curious arresting greenish-brown eyes, and a very noble rather low forehead, behind which you knew there must be an exceptional brain. I never saw a more beautiful neck and shoulders; so marvellously white were they, that on the very rare occasions on which the world had a chance of viewing them it was apt to stare—thereby greatly disconcerting their owner, whose modesty was of the type that used to be called maidenly. In fact the great problem was to prevent her swathing them in chiffon.

About middle height, the figure was not good; she stooped slightly, yet the effect was graceful and ingratiating, rather as though she were bending forward to look at you through the haze of her own golden atmosphere. In spite of this etherial quality there was a touch of homeliness about her—to use the word in its best sense—a combina-

tion I have never met with in anyone else. Of great natural capacity rather than well informed, a brilliant, most original talker, very amusing, and an inimitable mimic, she managed in spite of all her gifts to retain the childlike spirit which is one of the sympathetic traits in the German character—and what is more, to blend it with the strong-pinioned fascination of one who could but know, like Phyllis in the song, that she never failed to please. And this is surely a remarkable achievement! It really was true that with her sunshine came in at the door, and both sexes succumbed equally to her charm. As her marriage was notoriously happy, possibly too because her brilliant talents inspired a certain awe, men did not dare make love to her, not at least the sort of men she met at Leipzig. But I fancy that in other circumstances a small flirtation would not have been disdained; I used to tell her that when talking to men she became a different woman—a difference which though slight was perceptible —but this mild accusation didn't fit in with her scheme of things and was eagerly repudiated.

In a burgher world it certainly went for something that this siren was an aristocrat. Sincerely as everyone in the artist set despised worldliness, I think her exploits in the kitchen (for among other things she was a heaven-inspired cook) gained in picturesqueness when you reflected, that had the Court of Hanover not come crumbling about their ears in early youth, she and her sister Julia Brewster would have been Maids of Honour. Logic has made great strides in Germany, but at that time there were still a few illogical people about.

The essential point was of course her musical genius. Almost by instinct she read and played from score as do few routined conductors, and in judgment, critical faculty, and all-round knowledge was the perfect musician. And yet, though if ever I worshipped a being on earth it was Lisl, her singing and playing left me cold. This critical attitude on the part of a novice might well have vexed one accustomed to unqualified admiration on all sides,

from Brahms downwards; but being quite unspoiled she was only puzzled, and used sometimes to ask: 'How comes it that thou alone dost not love my music-making?' to which I would reply, as I believed, that thinking too much about voice-production and fingering interfered with her spontaneity, never guessing that what was lacking was the one thing needful, passion. At the bottom of all that tender warmth and enthusiasm—'Gemüth,' as the Germans call it—was a curious hardness of which in all the years of our friendship I saw but one passing sign, and which perhaps nothing short of one of those catastrophes that shake human nature to its foundations would have laid bare. Her music betrayed it, but here again she was so richly equipped, and the spell her musicality cast was so potent, that as far as I know others were not conscious of fundamental coldness. Years afterwards her brother-in-law H. B. told me that he had guessed it, and once in the early days of our acquaintanceship in Florence (1883) I remember his saying that to drive a spear too deeply into that soil might be to break its point. But as I was the only outsider on spear-driving terms of intimacy with her, no one had put it to the proof, and at the time that remark was made it was indignantly brushed aside by me.

I noticed early in the day, however, in connection with a third person, that she had not much psychological instinct, not in deep places at least. Complex natures baffled her, and I would sometimes charge her with lacking the sort of poetic imagination that saves you from cracking your brain over odd twists and turns of character. 'Surely if you do this or that, *it is natural* that the other person should react thus and thus?' she would say in cases where it was obvious that the person would react in quite another manner; and once she astonished me by writing: 'To understand a person's action means, surely, that you yourself would act thus in their place?'[1] which I thought a fantastic interpretation of understanding.

[1] Appendix, III., ii. p. 25, No. 9.

Again I had always assumed that harmony was the crown, the final polish, the ultimate subjection of possibly dissonant elements, not the avoiding of dissonance for the sake of consonance. 'Take all that comes along, all at least that matters, and work it into your scheme somehow' —such was my unformulated creed . . . but it was not Lisl's. In the light of what happened afterwards—the eternal small crises all down the years as well as the final breach—I see in her not only a temperamental worship of harmony at any cost, but recognise how almost unconsciously, and with infinite skill, she avoided conflicts; also that those who associated with her, from her husband downwards, took care that no tempest should ruffle her sunny serenity. This dislike of stress and storm was never connected in my mind, nor I think in the minds of those who conformed to it, with the valvular heart disease which was a perpetual source of secret terror and distress to me, and of which she was to die when relatively a young woman. But nowadays, having noticed how an obscure instinct of self-preservation determines the course of persons thus afflicted, I think her malady was probably as great a factor in our story as any other.

This by the way. Meanwhile in that Spring of 1878, making straight for the sheltered waters on which, like an enchanted boat, her soul was floating, there appeared on the horizon . . . a Stormy Petrel!

Herzogenberg, or to give him his full title, Heinrich Freiherr von Herzogenberg, was a few years older than his wife, and had been brought up by the Jesuits for the priesthood, as are many younger sons of noble Austrian families; but on reaching adolescence he rebelled in order to devote himself to music—as unheard-of a thing in his walk of life as in mine. The family was originally French, his grandfather, Vicomte Picot de Peccaduc, having emigrated to Bohemia at the time of the French Revolution and taken the name and title of Freiherr von Herzogenberg —a correct but inadequate rendering of his own fine

patronymic. A slight Jesuitical strain in the grandson, which he was quite aware of but which never affected him in the larger issues of life, worked in delightfully with his humanness, culture, and abounding sense of humour. Though without her glamour—and who would wish to find two such shining ones under the same roof?—he was quite as much beloved by those who knew them well as his wife. Of course he adored her, and in one of her early letters, she, the least vain of women, told me how delighted she had been, when finding himself near her at some smart party (and of an evening she was positively dazzling) he remarked in the dry, comic way his friends knew so well: 'Abgesehen von aller Verwandschaft muss ich gestehen dass du hübsch bist' ('Apart from relationship I must confess that thou art pretty').

A more learned musician can never have existed; without trouble he turned out fugues, canons, etc., etc., that could be read backwards, upside down, or in a looking-glass—a gift that has as little to do with music, perhaps, as tying yourself into knots or playing twelve games of chess at once, but which is certainly rare and remarkable. He used to compose for a given number of hours daily, and as may be guessed the result was often dry. I know not with what ambition he started his career, but remember his once remarking rather touchingly that he made no claim to having anything new to say—merely hoped to hand on the good tradition. As was inevitable with such a wife, he arranged all his works for piano duett, which was one of the very few trials connected with this ideal couple, for he had a touch like a paving stone. She was as devoted to him as he to her, and in sympathetic company a very discreet little mutual demonstration would sometimes take place; this their adoring world found delightful, and eventually I learned to accept it as part of the German civilisation.

The Wachs and Herzogenbergs, who at once became the kernel of my Leipzig existence, associated but super-

ficially and in a slight spirit of superiority with various other friends of mine to whom I was deeply attached—worldlings in whose company, as hinted above, certain aspects of home life were found again. Chief among these was a family whose name heads the list when I am meditating unpayable debts for kindnesses received. The master of the house, Consul Limburger, was a wealthy wool merchant and the only real man of the world in Leipzig, gay, handsome, well turned out, and without a touch of German heaviness. Serious persons considered him frivolous but were none the less obliged to follow his lead, for he was the moving spirit of the whole place. As president of the Gewandhaus Concert Committee he fought hard against the intense conservatism of that body and it was mainly his work that the Siegfried Idyll was forced on to the programme—a crime to forgive him which took all Frau Livia's Christian charity, and needless to say she was among the absentees at that concert. He further managed the Gewandhaus Balls, the big suppers given to passing celebrities, and started various innovations in sport, such as paper-chases on horseback and I think polo. Finally he had the best cook in Leipzig, and once told me his luxury was to expect whatever wine he ordered to appear on his table and . . . never to check his cellar-book. The same system of not enquiring into things too closely was observed as regards his sons, and I fear laid up trouble for him in later life.

His wife had, in certain subtle ways, more affinity with the people one knew at home than anyone else in the town. I cannot quite sum it up by saying she was a gentlewoman—there were other Leipzig ladies who could claim to be that of course—but these had a touch of provincialism, whereas behind her quality was a larger civilisation, something which I really believe none of her intimates noticed except myself. She was of an old patrician Frankfort family and her conversation was interlarded with French phrases like the letters of Goethe's mother, another Frankfort woman. Now here is a curious fact.

I had no enthusiastic soul-to-soul alliance with her as with Frau Livia and others—it was just the friendly relation between a woman of the world and a girl she is kind to; and yet, at the most difficult moment of my life, merely by taking it for granted that certain people don't do certain things, however strongly circumstances seem to point that way, she in great measure saved the situation for me—as will be told when the time comes. Expressed gratitude, expressed anything, would have embarrassed her beyond words but . . . she knew that I knew; and afterwards, when terrible sorrow came to her, I think it was some comfort to talk to me by the hour, that silent bond being between us.

In my experience with her I first learned what subsequent knowledge of life has confirmed, that when you are in a tight place worldlings are often better Christians than the elect. And another thing; this old friend had peculiarities that most people found rather ridiculous and beyond which they never got. But such eccentricities often argue, in absence of all preoccupation with self, a purity of spirit that seems to me beyond all else rare and lovable—and this was her case.

The Limburgers were typically German in that, with the exception of the mother and the one daughter, every member of the family was as much at home in music as ducks in water. They danced, shot, rode, skated, besides being assiduous young men of business, but all played the piano or some other instrument, and a new work performed at the Gewandhaus was as much an event for them as for the Herzogenbergs. Their criticisms may have been less technical but I discussed music as gladly with them as with many an expert; and this is the supreme charm of a musical civilisation—that amateurs are in it and of it as well as professionals. What a bore it would be if you could only talk books in literary circles, and what a comfort that reading can never become a fashionable fad, to which, alas! in unmusical countries music so fatally lends

itself; thus does the smart world go to concerts in Paris, and in London to the Opera.

. . . . . .

Before leaving the subject of Leipzig personalities I must mention two sisters who were an integral part of the scene. One, Frau von B., was the widow of the only aristocrat except Herzogenberg who had ever been a composer of merit. This wise and wealthy man, in order to satisfy the baulked maternal instincts of his childless wife, had left a small fortune for the founding of a home for seven poor musical students, to be built in his big garden and run by his widow. On the subject of her guardianship of these ever-recurring batches of youths, popularly known after the well-known folk tale as 'the Seven Ravens,' volumes might be written; how they were either talented but too rascally to keep, or talentless but too charming to turn out. The true stories of their escapades, together with the versions they themselves related to their guardian, used to go the round of the town; I think she suspected the truth more than was generally supposed, but like many people found it convenient to feign ignorance.

If this kindest, most generous and lovable of old ladies was a little on the grotesque side, her sister, Frau Dr. E., was surely the most fantastic figure ever accepted and assimilated by civilised society. I have described the astonishing Leipzig dialect, but as spoken by Frau Dr. E., who, from the crown of her head to the soles of her feet, showed what Nature in ungracious mood can achieve when she gives her mind to it, it killed all conversation around her (just as the celebrated garlic of the Rosenthal overpowdered the scent of other flowery growths); . . . further it was her habit to say out loud things which as a rule only escape one in unguarded moments.

The advantage of a self-contained provincial society is that originals are permitted to luxuriate in peace; thus amazing types of monk are seen prowling about in Italy such as are only produced within monastery walls. And

when I think sadly of dead and gone romantic Germany, it is an additional pang to reflect that with dwarfs, gnomes, and witches on broomsticks, figures such as Frau Dr. E. have disappeared for ever.

The first time I saw her was at a musical gathering at her sister's; I noticed a massive old woman yawning as if her jaw would drop off who presently said to Frau Röntgen: 'Do not think, best Frau Concertmeister, it is because I am bored, but whenever your dear husband plays the fiddle it sets me yawning.' I duly called on her later, as politeness demanded, and when I expressed regret at not finding her in she remarked: 'Well, I cannot say I regret it, for to tell the truth you are to me from my heart unsympathetic—*but I believe the kernel is good.*' She was a widow without family, rich and incredibly stingy, and being devoid of false shame, many of the E. anecdotes for ever flying about were on that theme. At a supper she gave to the Seven Ravens I heard her say loudly when a grand ice-cream appeared: 'This is only to be handed round *once* '; another time, while slowly turning the pages of a subscription list, she observed to the collector without a smile: 'Let me see what is the smallest sum one can give.' Again, cabs in those days cost five groschen for one person, and six groschen for two. A piteously poor friend of hers was once driven by her to a concert, and knowing her patroness's peculiarities duly handed over three groschen; and the incoming stream of concert-goers heard Frau Dr. E. say, in her slow, final way: 'No, thou needst not pay half, but thy groschen thou canst well pay,' whereupon she selected and pocketed two halfpennies.

There is in many circles of society an individual corresponding to the Court Fool, an *enfant terrible* who performs, like Tragedy in the Aristotelian sense, a universal purgative rite, delivering other bosoms of perilous stuff. Such a benefactress was Frau Dr. E., than whom the world can better spare many a more decorative figure.

CHAPTER XXI

Spring 1878

And now, having given some idea of the people who made up my new world, I will go back to the moment when I first met the Herzogenbergs, that is the end of February 1878. I knew at once for certain that we belonged in the same group, as the ensuing years were to prove, and though aware of her notorious aversion to new relations trusted to music to build a bridge between us, which it did. Both of them told me they had heard great reports of my musicality and I was at once asked to show off. I well remember that Herzogenberg was far more forthcoming than his wife; and though she upbraided me in a friendly, semi-jocular manner for not having joined the Bach Verein and urged me to do so without delay, it was he who, after cross-questioning me about my studies, suggested I should bring him my exercise books to look at.

Of course I turned up with them next day, and was overwhelmed by his raillery of Conservatorium teaching, as he pointed out one gross uncorrected error after another. Both were genuinely interested by my compositions, but again I noticed she was the more reserved of the two, and understood this reserve had nothing to do with the music. Finally Herzogenberg proposed undertaking my tuition himself. ' It will be great fun,' he said, ' for I have never given a lesson in my life; and what is more,' he added, turning to his wife ' thou, who hast so often bewailed thy contrapuntal ignorance, shalt also be my pupil . . . and I shall meanwhile learn how to teach.'

Needless to say I fell in rapturously with this proposal, insisted on his accepting some nominal fee, for honour's sake, ceased attending my Conservatorium classes (ostensibly on the score of health) and it was understood that before leaving for the summer holidays I was to give formal notice. I at once joined the Bach Verein and began, with my lessons, an initiation into Bach. Strange to say he did not reveal himself to me at once, not even in the 'Passion according to St. Matthew' which I heard on the ensuing Good Friday for the first time. Yet is it so strange after all? Between Bach and Beethoven there is at least as wide a gulf as between Giotto and Giorgione, and at that time my musical intelligence was only cultivated in patches. Before six months had elapsed Bach occupied the place he has ever since held in my heart as the beginning and end of all music; meanwhile the Herzogenbergs were doing their best to speed up matters.

Shortly after joining the Bach Verein an incident occurred which opened my eyes to the fact that Germans harboured feelings about the English of which we had no suspicion and which certainly were not reciprocated. My enlightener, a stately black-bearded man with extra polite Leipzig manners and rather a friend of mine I had imagined, was a certain Herr Flinsch—Treasurer of the Bach Verein, one of our leading basses, and also, although I did not know it, a wholesale stationer. One day I went into a smart looking shop and asked for some English writing paper. An article was produced which did not meet my wishes, and I began describing exactly what was wanted, repeatedly saying: 'it must be *English* paper.' Suddenly from a back-room in the shop, my black-bearded friend darted out in a violent passion, and without one word of greeting launched into a diatribe about the paper trade—informing me that as a matter of fact all the best so-called English paper was made in Germany, and merely sent to England and stamped 'English' to satisfy (alas!) the snobbishness of his own countrymen, who still believed

in the supremacy of English wares. A day was at hand however when German industry would no longer suffer these humiliations—when all the world would know where the best of everything comes from, namely Germany. After which outburst the speaker bounced back into his den, again omitting any sort of greeting, and banged the door. When next we met at rehearsal, and ever after, our relations were distant and dignified.

During the few weeks of opportunity that remained to me for the time being, I applied myself busily to two tasks; the first orders of counterpoint, and the stealthy undermining of my fellow pupil's delicate but unmistakable aloofness. Meanwhile, it might be asked, what did Frau Dr. Brockhaus, hitherto my great friend and confidant, say to these new developments? It had been arranged ages ago, long before the dawning of Lisl, that I was to go to the Berg, their country place near Dresden, for a few days after Easter; and though the idea of leaving Leipzig was now intolerable, especially since the Herzogenbergs were departing in the second half of April, I shrank from hurting kind Frau Doctor's feelings by breaking my engagement. But I was not a good hand at keeping things to myself, and she found out she had a rival. Yet such was Lisl's reputation for charm, genius, and so forth, that my older friend no more blamed me than Calypso and Circe would have blamed Ulysses for falling in love with Minerva, had the goddess seen fit to give that complexion to their alliance. I duly went to the Berg, but despite warm feelings of gratitude and affection towards my hostess, blessed the grand final Bach Verein concert that brought me back to Leipzig on duty after four days' absence.

Then suddenly Fate did me a good turn. Immoderate work, combined with too much excitement generally, was telling on me. I had among other things become subject to violent fits of palpitation, and there were yet more drastic warnings, such as the romantic fainting on the ice, that health was giving way under the strain. At last one day, at a birthday party at the Klengels, I collapsed

altogether. Lisl, who was present, and who, though I was unaware of the fact, had gradually become attached to me in spite of herself, insisted on taking me straight back to my attic, and during the rather severe illness that followed, really a nervous break-down, nursed me as I had never been nursed before, putting off her departure from Leipzig a fortnight in order to see me through the worst.

And there, amid the homely surroundings of sloping roof and ramshackle furniture, began the tenderest, surely the very tenderest relation that can ever have sprung up between a woman and one who, in spite of her years, was little better than a child. I had heard, but almost forgotten, that the one sorrow of her strangely happy life was that she was childless; now I came to know that this grief, though seldom alluded to, was abiding and passionate—(as a matter of fact this was the only spot of passion in her). Shortly before I met her hope had finally been abandoned, and though one or two attempts to coax unwilling nature were made later on, it was without much hope as far as she was concerned. Thus I became heir to a fund of pent-up maternal love.

Every day during that happy fortnight as the clock struck eight I heard her slowly climbing the stairs, pausing for breath methodically at every fourth step; then the door curtain was pushed aside and the dear face, framed in a haze of golden hair, peeped in cautiously lest I should still be asleep. Asleep! . . . when I knew Lisl was coming . . . ! Except for two hours at midday, when her maid was sent to mount guard, she stayed with me the whole livelong day, washing me herself, performing all the sick-room offices for me, cooking on her own little cooker the most tempting dishes her culinary genius could devise, reading to me, alternately petting and keeping me in order. And as I got better she used to play Bach and Brahms, including her own wonderful arrangement of the new symphony, knocked together in a few hours from the full score lent her by him before she had ever heard a note of it—the sort of thing

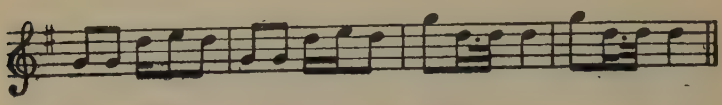
she did with no trouble, and made as light of as she did of her heart complaint. It was settled that though my mother must never hear of it I was really her child, that, as she put it, she must have ' had ' me without knowing it when she was eleven; all this was a characteristic blend of fun and tenderness that saved it from anything approaching morbidity, of which she had the greatest horror. At that time our conversation was carried on in both languages, later always in German. She was one of the very few foreigners I have met to talk English with whom was not distressing; her accent was admirable, not indiscreetly so as is sometimes the case, but, like her vocabulary and handling of the language, easy, original, funny, and somehow or other just right—as indeed was everything about her.

At the beginning of my illness the doctor had feared permanent heart damage; not till this danger was finally ruled out and my convalescence in full swing did she consent to leave me and depart for Austria with her husband, appointing Johanna Röntgen *chargée d'affaires*. At every stage of the journey postcards were sent, and during the two weeks that elapsed before I was fit to start for England the daily letter was the only event that counted, though mysterious boxes of chocolate, flowers, and books were continually being left at my door ' by command of the gracious lady von Herzogenberg.'

I missed her so dreadfully that most nights my pillow was wet with tears—a babyish weakness which, when she heard of it, touched but still more distressed her. Never was anyone more enamoured of gaiety and serenity than she. After her departure I was allowed to see a few friends, and learned that in the early stages of my illness, Anna, the servant, had remarked to one very stiff Leipzig grandee who had asked what was wrong: ' Vielleicht ist das Fräulein zu lustig gewesen ' (Perhaps the Fräulein has been too gay) —the sort of thing you would say of a student recovering after an orgy.

Meanwhile a coterie of birds had settled in a tree near my window, and one of them, which at first I thought was

a bullfinch, but it was not, used daily to waken me with this little theme (on which I afterwards worked many contrapuntal exercises in England):



For a moment I had feared this illness might furnish my father with an excuse for opposing my return to Leipzig later on, but that dread was dispelled by a sentence in a dear letter from mother. 'Of course, darling,' she wrote, 'you shall go back; I told Papa it would kill you not to.' This was the sort of thing that made me adore her so. Eventually I started for home about the middle of June in the charge of a girl I had made friends with, Nancy Crawfurd by name (now Mrs. Gould Ross), whom Lisl once referred to as 'that nice girl with the kind nose,' and who actually put off her own journey home till I was fit to travel, having promised my new mother to deliver me safely into the hands of the real one.

. . . . . .

And now, at the outset of a relation which governed my life both humanly and musically for so many years, I should like to say in what medium this part of my memoirs is steeped—say it once for all, not to touch on the subject again till a certain date seven years later has been reached.

I have said we were to be violently separated by Fate; when that separation became final I put away all the letters from her I possessed and never thought my eyes would rest on them again. In 1892, a few months after her sudden death, a parcel arrived through a mutual friend, inscribed on the inner covering in her husband's well-known hand: 'Ethel's letters to Lisl.' This parcel I never even opened, but laid it, as in a vault, beside the other in an old tin despatch-box of my father's, on which are painted his styles and titles as lieutenant in the East India Company's service—a box nearly ninety years old!

When, a few weeks ago, it occurred to me by way of a pastime to write these memoirs, I meant to stop at the moment of my flight to Germany—chiefly because I shrank from opening that vault. The resolution taken, for many days I was in a dream, staring at the tragedy with the dazed, uncomprehending eyes of thirty-three years ago, astounded at the richness and beauty of that long tender friendship—wondering, with the old, dull bewilderment, how such things can come to an end. Only by degrees did it seem possible to fix my eyes on the happiest years of my early life and let them tell their story as they were lived—without a thought of what was to follow.

APPENDIX II

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[*a*] Letters from Myself to my Mother and other Members of the Family, 1877–1878 . 218

[*b*] Letters from Elisabeth von Herzogenberg ['Lisl'], May 27 to June 9, 1878 . . 256

[*a*]

From Myself to my Mother and other Members of the Family, 1877–1878.

[*Note.—I found the following letters among my Mother's papers, and such is the enthusiasm they radiate that I hope I may be pardoned for printing them with all their youthful redundancies on their head—(a temptation to tone down the slanginess of the style having been resisted with some difficulty). It must be remembered that those at home were waiting to hear whether my claim to having a vocation was illusory or not, so no wonder I nearly went off my head with joy at the encouragement I met with, and eagerly reported it.*

I lit on these letters some time after the corresponding part of the main text had been written, consequently a few incidents are described twice over—the only time this will happen in these pages. But I think it may amuse other memoir-writers beside myself to compare the two versions—separated by an interval of forty years !]

(1)

Rotterdam: July 27, 1877.

My own darling Mother,—Here we are, safe and sound, after a most successful journey, with all our luggage so far

intact and our persons washed and in order. . . . Well, once at Harwich we were the first people out of the train and the first on board the steamer, thus getting the pick of the berths. We sat up on deck until one o'clock and anything more beautiful than the night you cannot imagine, a very calm sea and brilliant moonlight. As we left the breakwater behind we passed close to a bell buoy which tolled in the most eerie and dismal manner imaginable. I slept like a top till the stewardess called me just as we were entering the river. We were on it about an hour and a half, passing through quite the ugliest country I ever set eyes on, as flat as a board and nothing but bulrushes and poplar avenues leading apparently nowhere and planted apparently apropos of nothing in particular. The little villages are like toy villages and look as if painted afresh every morning, and the windmills are absolutely bewildering and all the colours of the rainbow.

My billy-cock seemed to create great excitement and interest among the Dutch sailors, as indeed among some dirty boys in St. James's Park, one of whom informed me that I had got his father's hat on. At present I am writing in the coffee-room, and the dialect sounds like German baby-language. There are plenty of asphalt patches about the town, and Harry and I are thinking of extemporising a net with a table cloth, marking out a court, and commencing a game of lawn-tennis. . . . We go on straight to-night, stopping nowhere, and arriving at Leipzig about eight to-morrow morning. We then repair to a hotel, wash, dress, etc., and go on to the Friedländers. I shall in all probability write from there again to-morrow. I cannot realise that I am off one bit, and I did not dare talk about it yesterday for fear of realising it too much.

Good-bye, my darling Mother. My dear love to all, and I do hope Nina and Violet are playing lawn-tennis a good deal . . . and *sitting up !*

Your most loving child.

(2)

Lepizig ! ! July 28, 1877.
Something Hotel (Didn't catch the name).

. . . All ideas are flown and I am mentally wallowing in one thought and one only, i.e., here I am, and I have only just begun to realise that fact. You know we came

straight through, and both slept like tops. The carriage was too full to admit of lying down, and yet I did not even feel stiff, nor I believe does Harry, who will probably speak for himself ere I close this. . . Harry and I on our arrival made elaborate toilettes and sat down with zest to Kaffee and Brödchen, though we had gone through the same performance at half-past five this morning at Magdeburg, and I have just come in from a prowl about town. Of course I at once repaired to the Conservatorium and gazed at that most gloomy edifice with feelings easier to imagine than to describe, though somewhat modified by the fact that we were not quite sure which of seven or eight gloomy edifices in the block was actually the Conservatorium, as the latter adjoins the University and is much the same style of building. There were a good many students strolling about, with very festive caps and less festive, not to say stodgy, casts of countenance. Most of them wear spectacles, *all* wear trousers that bag at the knee, and not a few are decorated with intersecting cuts on their faces—these latter swagger a good deal. We then repaired to the public gardens where I saw what my eyes had often pictured—the masses of chairs, and in the midst the raised orchestra with desks all round. I see 'Egmont' is to be played to-night at the theatre; I wonder if we shall go. Harry thinks it is time to go to Place de Repos, so I close this for the present. . . .

(3)

To Alice Davidson

Place de Repos, Treppe G., Leipzig: July 30, 1877.

. . . The sort of life I at present lead is this: I get called at half-past six or seven, get up leisurely and ask for my breakfast, which goes by the name of 'Kaffee.' Each person has their own little tray, coffee-pot, plate of rolls, pat of butter, etc. You can have an egg if you like, but I don't. You have this meal in your own room, or else in the sitting-room quite promiscuously and independent of anyone else. There are beautiful public baths close by, and after your coffee you repair to the baths. I mean to learn to swim by-and-bye. I then write and read and

practise; dinner is at one, and consists of hot meat, always plainly and well cooked, generally meat cutlets or slices off the joint. Seldom the joint. Or else you have little wee chickens cut up into four bits and roasted in dripping (not gravy). The salads are truly wonderful, all sorts of vegetables cooked up cold in grease and vinegar, with little dabs of forced meat and bread dumplings scattered about it. Then one has cucumber, and yellow beans as hard as nails and very sour. Then comes the inevitable 'Mehlspeise,' a sort of sodden but well-mixed pie-crust stuffed with some plums or sweet cherries in between—the sort of thing Papa would like the children and himself to live on. Then rolls (my pet 'Franzbrödchen' and others) and butter appear, and sometimes fresh fruit. After dinner the Frau Professor goes to sleep, I fancy, and about 3.30 or 4 we go in the garden and drink milk fresh from the cow and coffee and rolls, playing cards or reading. Whist is a favourite game, and Frau Professor, Thekla,[1] Mr. B., and I are to play in an hour or so. There is a forest about five minutes from here which is ten miles through, and therein is a little 'Restauration,' as they call them, where a glorious orchestra plays Mondays and Fridays.

You would be astonished at the cheapness of everything here. Theatre tickets at 1s. 6d., and this morning I bought all that the soul of woman can desire in the shape of writing-paper, envelopes, steel pens, black and white cottons, ink, boot-laces, etc., for about 1s. 3½d. Little things are less than one-third of the English prices and of course one is able to go continually to the Opera; yesterday we went to hear 'Lohengrin' and this evening are going to hear 'Aida'! Harry comes back to-morrow and leaves for Scotland on Thursday I think; as you know he's in Dresden at present . . . he *was* so dear travelling. . . .

Perhaps Mother would like to see this letter so do send it to Frimhurst and write soon, darling. On second thoughts send it first to dear old Mary to whom I shan't write till I have something to tell. . . .

[1] Fräulein Friedländer.

(4)

Friedrichsroda, Thüringen : August 5.

My darling Mother,—As I mean Sunday to be my day for writing home, I herewith inaugurate that festival, sitting at 9 o'clock in a little arbour in a little garden in a little town in a little mountainous province called Thüringen. We came here yesterday quite *en masse*, Frau Friedländer, Thekla, Marie, and the two Scotch girls who live with the Friedländers, called Binning. Gustchen (Fräulein Redeker) comes on Wednesday. We were met at the station by the great baritone of whom you have heard me speak, and of whom Jenny Lind says he is the finest artist she has ever heard since Stockhausen—Herr Henschel. As he always sang in London with my two, they are all great friends, and we shall simply have the loveliest music to be had anywhere all the two or three weeks we are here, for Herr Henschel was brought up to be a pianist and plays splendidly. He is a regular genius, and his compositions are lovely. I hear he draws most beautifully, but shall soon see for myself, as at 10 o'clock we are going up there (he is staying with a Herr von Milde half-way up the mountains) to do music. It is too delicious! The manners and customs are too funny. We live in a little villa, the whole of which would go into the hall at home, and in the cellar live four cows. On Sundays they are let out into the fields. You hear ever so far off a horn, very fairly played, and presently a man appears, playing it all about the town, at which signal all the cows tramp forth with a most bewildered air and are driven away.

German beds, till you get accustomed to them, are not very comfortable. To begin with, they are of wood and about the size of an ordinary crib. The mattress is fixed in, and over that a sheet, exactly the breadth of the bed and a little longer, is laid; on the top of you is a sort of pancake consisting of two sheets sewn together with bits of flannel between, the same size as the under-sheet, so that even were the mattress not glued to the bed, tucking up is an impossibility. If you are not a quiet sleeper, which I now am, all the things are naturally kicked on to the floor in no time. In the winter you have a feather-bed on top of you, which you wrap round you *à*

la martial cloak. And, oh, the butter and cream and Franzbrödchen and fruit and pure cold air! I shall have to wear a jersey here, so cold is it, and my appetite is perfectly alarming. We went on Thursday last to Halle where Thekla and Gustchen had to sing in one of the many Church concerts given here. I did not care about the two first things much, Mendelssohn's 'Lauda Sion' and a Cantata of Bach's. But the last thing, Mendelssohn's 'Forty-second Psalm,' in which the two had a long duet, was quite lovely.

That reminds me not to forget to tell you that before we left Leipzig I went to hear Verdi's new Opera 'Aida' (in which Patti plays in London). You know the scene is laid in Egypt, and one of the kings comes in with his victorious army, carrying trophies, i.e., dogs, cats, storks, frogs, and heaven knows what else, on the ends of long sticks. On anything being said of which the army approves, all the sticks are waved frantically in the air and the beasts get mixed up. How I laughed! Why will they be so realistic?

Yesterday we stopped at Weimar and went to see Schiller's and Goethe's houses, and then their coffins. It was awfully interesting. Everyone is so fond of 'Rothraut.' I am going to print it and the five others, and sell them if I can. . . .

Thank you, my darling mother, over and over again for your dear, newsy letter. I am more than happy. Harry will have told you how completely and utterly at home I am here, and I think we are all really fond of each other. The German life suits me so wonderfully, *everything*, eating, drinking, manners, etc. Frau Professor says I am as if I had been here six months at least, and I feel as if I had been here for years. In this musical country, strange to say, my music goes farther than in unmusical England, and my accompanying and singing at sight are made much use of. Darling mother, indeed I will tell you *everything*, whether I am ill or well, happy, or, what is impossible, unhappy. I can't help feeling glad to think I am missed. . . .

B. is really a nice boy. You can't think how good-natured he is to me, and if I allowed it would give me the very coat off his back. Old Frau F. I like the least of the party; she strikes me as an awful old humbug, always 'Mein liebstes theuerstes Fräulein' and such grimaces and posing. I don't think the Binnings love her. They say she is very kind and so on, but very slithery. To old

Frau Professor I am quite devoted, such a plain-sailing, simple, straightforward old thing.

. . . These German pens drive me wild. Could you in your next letter send me a couple of ' J ' pens, and in the next two more, and so on, as I can get no decent nibs in Germany. Dearest love to the children and best thanks for their dear letters. I am so glad Miss Periwig makes them sit up, and hope their lawn-tennis will prosper when the heat is less intense. . .

(5)

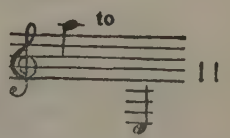
Friedrichsroda: August 12, 1877.

. . . Henschel is only 27, but he is gradually making a name for himself, and musicians take on an average 40 years to do this. One day when I was out of the room Thekla told him I composed, and on my return he asked me (as he afterwards confessed as a matter of politeness and with no expectations) to see something I had done. I produced a song—we have no piano, but of course he reads it through like a book. Mother! he said such things of my talent! Things I never even dreamed of. He said it was simply wonderful, and could not believe I had had no tuition. Of course he found faults, and afterwards told a friend of his whom I know that they were faults arising from talent. In the afternoon we went to the von Mildes. He is the first man in the Berlin Opera, old now, but a great musician with a voice like a god, and his wife is also very musical. Of course Henschel was there and several other musicians, and I was asked to sing some things of mine. Mother! I wish you had been there. They were astonished, they all came round and said it was ' merkwürdig, wundervoll,' and all the afternoon, when Henschel was strumming, as *he* only can strum, between the songs, he kept on coming back to the modulation at ' Schweig' still, mein Herz ' in ' Rothraut ' which pleased him hugely. Afterwards, when we were all supping, our host proposed the health of the artists and coupled with it the name of ' one who has but lately come among us and whom we hope to keep,' and once again I was fêted, and oh I wish you had been there! The bliss of knowing that

when I went on so about cultivating my talent, I was not wrong! For though I felt it myself, I sometimes doubted whether it was only for a woman, and an Englishwoman living in a not musical circle, that I was anything particular in music—whether such talent as I have deserved to have everything else put aside for it. And now I know it does deserve it! The greatest musical genius I know has seen my work and so to speak has given it his blessing, and it is well with me . . . !

Don't think, mother darling, that this makes me lose my head, that I fancy I have only to put pen to paper and become famous. It is just this: men who have lived among musicians all their lives, who have been hand in glove with Schumann and Mendelssohn, and are so with Brahms and Rubinstein, say they seldom saw such talent, in a woman *never*, and I can but tell *you* all this. I know though that years and years, perhaps, of hard work are before me, years in which little or nothing I do shall be printed—this I have resolved on—and in which I shall be nobody, and at the end of which is *perhaps* a laurel crown awaiting me in the shape of a name! But the end is worth the uphill struggle, and if application and hard steady work can do anything I ought to get it.

I go up every day into the mountain and compose. Then to the von Mildes I go a good deal, and am very welcome I think—so it seems! Then we go up to the meadows and play croquet, and then up to where Henschel lives and sing, sing, sing! Oh, those three! Thekla is not in good voice, but Meine Königin, alias Fräulein Redeker, is in first-rate voice, and the music we have simply defies description. She is at this moment wandering about in a pink dressing-gown singing *Scenas* out of an opera of Rubinstein's, and it is rather distracting.

Do you know she sings from 

It is a glorious voice and *won't* be kept in. She is literally bubbling over with singing. Yesterday all four of them sang for a charity in the church, but I never do care for sacred music except, oh! I must except, the bass duet, ' The

Lord is a Man of War,' which is certainly a grand thing. Henschel sang it with Santley at the Handel Festival. . . .

Please send on my accounts to Papa! My German gets on A1, I always speak it, even to the Scotch girls. . . .

(6)

Friedrichsroda: August 19, 1877.

. . . Fancy, staying in the house with Henschel is your old Wildbad friend, Herr von Roumanim; he raves about Mary! He is a pleasant man and bade me remember him most kindly and respectfully to my Frau Mutter and Fräulein Schwester! Also I was to tell you that now he wears his hair long, not like a tooth-brush, as when you knew him.

I have had several talks with Henschel about my music and am most awfully happy about it. He thinks more of my talent than ever I did! and has written about me to Brahms with whom he was almost brought up, and to Simrock, the publisher. It is so glorious to be told by competent persons that one's future lies in one's own hands, that the material for realising hopes I hardly ever—I think never—breathed at home even, is there; and I have but to work hard and steadily and then *not to be too soon pleased with myself.* Every day I become more and more convinced of the truth of my old axiom, that why no women have become composers is because they have married, and then, very properly, made their husbands and children the first consideration. So even if I were to fall desperately in love with BRAHMS and he were to propose to me, I should say no! So fear not that I shall marry in Germany! I told Henschel my opinion, and he said perhaps I was right, but as he himself has, I am told, an 'unglückliche Liebe'[1] on hand, I don't think he is a judge! He *is* so good to me, corrects my songs for me (I have composed lots more), sets me basses on which to construct chorales and all sorts of things; and yet I know if I were Henschel it would be a great pleasure to me to get hold of a new pupil to give a friendly shove-on to during a three weeks' do-nothing stay in a little primitive town. . . . I am, as always, very, very happy and oh so well. . . .

[1] Unfortunate attachment.

(7)

Leipzig ; August 22, 1877.

. . . Your dear letters are so very welcome; I think of you I don't know how many times in the day, and like to think that if your third daughter is giving you a great deal of trouble, the time *may* come when you will be proud of her. Do you remember I told you I should be just as all the rest in the Conservatorium, that we were treated like prisoners, known only by our *numbers* so to speak? Well, it is so, but here am I, not yet entered and yet known to the first masters! Is not that something to be pleased at! . . . I heard 'Euryanthe' the other day and was much bored. I do *not* rave over Weber, but have not yet heard 'Freischütz.' . . . I do hope Papa will send me some money soon. I know you will be pleased to hear that for want of time I must give up violin and devote myself to piano. . . .

Mother darling, as I always wanted to learn to swim, and as when once you *do* swim, swimming baths are much cheaper than others, I have begun learning it. The whole course of teaching costs 9s. however long it lasts, and then 3s. tip to the teacher. You can then bathe every day for 3s. 9d. a quarter, whereas in the other baths bathing twice a week costs nearly £1 a quarter. So in the end it is cheaper. If, however, you think this unnecessary I have still enough of the £5 papa gave me on my departure to pay for it, so please, mother darling, tell me what you think.

There seems every prospect of Mr. Ewing coming here for a few days in November or December; I wish she could come too . . . Maas has set me a sonata to write!!! I have done the first three movements, and very ugly two are.

(8)

September 9, 1877.

. . . The swimming is going on famously. On the third day I was in a great fright as a certain Frau Doktor who began with me could do it better than I, and as you know, owing to my muscularity, I generally do athletic sports better than most women. However, on the fourth day I balanced myself on the end of a sofa while Frau Professor, who is not small, sat at the other end, and flourished arms and legs to such advantage that the next

day I swam, with a cord, all round the bath several times, and the Frau Doktor was plunging about like a porpoise, swallowing pails of water, and leaving nothing to be seen above water but an agitated pair of heels going like a semaphore. Now I have beaten her all to smash, and small credit to me, as she is about 150, I should think, and goes about on dry land in a muslin cap with sort of butterfly bows in yellowish-red. I discovered to my intense astonishment that she lives in this very house, is in fact Herr Maas's landlady. One day when I went for my lesson I heard her scuttling down the passage and the banging of a door half-way up the same, so being versed in the ways of the Fatherland I stood still and waited, and sure enough out comes the head, yellow bows and all, is half withdrawn, and then I am recognised, and out dashes the Frau Doktor in Schlafrock and curl-papers, and you can imagine what an affecting meeting we had. . . .

I send you a photograph of myself that I had done for fun with my hair down; the rude Henschel said: 'Sehr hübsch als Bild, auch als Photographie, aber Sie müssen mir zugeben dass Sie nicht *so* hübsch sind!'[1] I told him he had never seen me with my hair down and that that made all the difference!!

There are two or three things in Germans that I should like to alter; as regards men, that they smoke the vilest cigarettes and spit so *recklessly*. As regards the women, they have got it into their heads that the fashionable and *chic* thing to do is to scratch all their hair up on the 'bend of the head' I used to talk so much about, and then plant a very fly-away hat at the extreme back of the erection. You would scream at the fashions and the attempts at something very killing, particularly in the theatre. As regards both sexes, I wish one could impress upon them that it is possible to walk in the town without banging against every soul you meet. I can't describe to you how unmannerly everyone is, bar the students, in this respect. At first I made way for people and fancied that everyone I met was in a great hurry and must be excused. But finding that my whole walk became a perpetual hopping on and off the pavement, like a canary between two perches, I resolved to do in Rome as the

[1] Very pretty as picture, but you must admit you are not as pretty as that!

Romans do; since then, thanks to the muscular development of which I am so proud and to which I now give full play, I have most exhilarating walks. . . .

How splendidly the Russians are doing, but the Turks, too, are doing wonders. Perhaps this war will raise the tone in Turkey supposing Turkey wins, but then it is the tone of the upper classes in Turkey that wants raising, and war won't affect them so much as the people. . . . Poor France! But how like the French to quarrel over Thiers' body and come to blows over the funeral! . . . I am going to-day to hear 'Tannhäuser'; it will be most interesting after seeing the Wartburg with my own eyes. On Tuesday and Thursday GREAT TREATS are in store for me, for I am to hear 'Don Giovanni' (in German) and 'Il Flauto Magico' for the first time! The other day I saw the great Marie Geistinger in Schiller's 'Maria Stuart.' The Geistinger was such a Maria as one dreams of. She is very, very beautiful, and, oh, how she acts! I always wept when I read that play; even the stony, tearless Mary wept at Miss D——'s, I remember, when we read it! So you may imagine how I howled in the theatre! Geistinger's voice is so wonderful—deep and thrilling—and she has more jewels they say than Patti. In one piece she plays in next week she wears them all nearly. She is equally good in comedy, but then there are many first-rate comedy players, and I don't think many can play tragedy like the Geistinger. She is a Baroness by birth and by marriage, and became an actress—*a real actress*, not a Lady Sebright—from sheer love of it, and her husband stands in the wings! I am sure to meet her at the Brockhauses. They are great people here, have a splendid house, and hold court of all the talent of the stage and studio in the town. Thanks, thanks, thanks for the 'J' pens. . . .

(9)

Place de Repos, Treppe G. III, Leipzig: September 16, 1877.

. . . Haven't the French a delicious expression about people wearing 'ribbons,' for instance, 'that *swear*'? I often think of that when I see a Teuton arrayed in her Sunday best, strolling—no, German ladies can't stroll—either jigging or stalking down the Promenade. I am going to-night to see

Marie Geistinger in 'Adrienne Lecouvreur,' translated into German of course. I daresay you know the piece. Adrienne was one of Rachel's great parts—and from what I've read of Rachel I should think the Geistinger could do all Rachel's rôles. I nearly had a fit to-day on hearing she is nearly 50!!!! She has the movements, figure, and voice of a girl! Of her face one can of course not judge; and this wonderful creature is here for four years! It is very delightful. . . .

I am a little behindhand with my work this week and must make up before Wednesday. I am so glad Violet can do back-handed half-volleys. She should practise against the house, and tell her that I don't mean that she and Nina shall beat me when I come! Darling Mother—the picture that always hangs on the wall of my memory is summer, and home again! I must be very careful of £ s. d.—and if at the last minute it should be found better for me not to come home, I will not grumble. But it is a long time hence! . . . Local news interests me immensely! *More* 'J' pens!!! . . .

(10)

September 23, 1877.

. . . It is (or has been) freezing here, and yesterday for the first time I started the stove! As you know, there are no fireplaces in Germany. I was horribly frightened of it, for when first lit it groans in a most alarming way, but it is, as a matter of fact, quite harmless. The heat these stoves throw out is enormous, and the room warms in about five minutes as completely as if there had been a fire there all day; but the nuisance is that unless you wish to be frizzled up with heat you must put on very little coal, and keep on so doing about every half-hour. This makes me rather wild, but for a person living the sort of life I do here it is much better to have a thing like a stove that acts at once than a fire. I let out the stove (which retains its heat all night) at 7.30 (supper-time), and it is then laid all ready for lighting next day. In the morning I fly out of bed at 5.30 and apply a match thereto (unlike a fire it always burns when once lit!!), get into bed again, set the alarum on half an hour, and when I get up at six the room is warm and the little pot of water I placed on the stove boiling—

so that I am sure of hot water to wash in (all Germans wash in cold, all winter through, and this I am sure is a key to the inadequacy of the performance!!). . . .

The great Sonata is finished!! That is, I am putting a touch or two to the last movement (a Rondo), but by my next lesson on Wednesday all will be ready. Maas is very complimentary about it, and I myself am pretty well satisfied with the latter movements—more because I feel now I am getting into working easily in the harness of form than because I think the Sonata itself particularly good. Three weeks ago I never could have believed it possible for me to launch out at once upon and bring to a satisfactory conclusion a piano work like a Sonata, and it is so encouraging to find a mountain melt into a mole-hill when you commence to scale it! The week after next is the 'Aufnahme Prüfung,' when all the new pupils have to enter the Conservatorium and play before the Directory—in fact, show off! Maas says I am to play the Sonata!! and as it is difficult I am now studying it with him! This will be a great recommendation for me at the outset of my career within those newly whitewashed walls.

After all I am not particularly quick at swimming nor the reverse, but about average! Fat people learn quickest, as they float better and have more leisure to think about making the movements properly. Those who, like me, have heavy bones and a thin, muscly frame, have at first greatest difficulty in keeping afloat but make the best swimmers in the end, and can dive, etc., better. I enjoy the Schwimm-Bassin immensely. The other day I came rather early—the gentlemen were not yet out—so I sat in the lobby and chatted with the swimming mistress and her two daughters, and said it was a great pity they had no piano there (in Germany you always find a well-tuned piano in all waiting-rooms and restaurants, etc.). At this moment in came a tall woman in black, who owns the whole 'Sophienbad' and hearing my remark entreated me to come upstairs and play on her piano. So I did, and sang away like fun. They were enchanted of course!!! and begged me to be 'too early' as often as possible. . . .

O Mother! now that the cold weather is coming I sometimes get a sort of sick feeling—'Hunting'!!—But one can't have everything, and if you have got what is best in life you can't expect to have what is second-best as well!

Rubinstein comes in November, also Schumann. Krebs next month!! Joachim also! Glory! . . .

(11)

To Nina Smyth

Tuesday evening, Ocotber 9.

. . . First I must tell you a proud moment is drawing near for me! In the Conservatorium you must have cards, as almost every interview with the ' heads ' must be prefaced by a sending up of your card. This is natural, as people of all nations are at the Conservatorium, and the names of 300 pupils are not easy to learn off by heart. My dear—there are two real live mulattos and one nigger here! The negress (for she is of the ' fair ' sex) is by way of being a great dresser. Nature manages her hair of course (and I'm sure no art could manage it), but she affections long gold ear-rings and most skittish bonnets, and wears gloves on all occasions. I suppose she forgets her face, and thinks that then no one'll see her hands. Then we've got a Norwegian with a red cap and tassel who parades about in a cassock and altogether is not unlike Uncle Charles; and three fire-worshippers who wear chimney-pot hats with no brims (sort of busbies made of top-hat material) and flowing robes like Papa's military cape, only more so. But I am wandering from my subject—I meant to show it was not unbridled vanity, nor reckless expenditure on my part, that caused me to order—100 visiting cards for 1s. 3d. with my name and address!!!! If ever there was a peacock I am that peacock, almost as grand as you will be when you can read writing. . . . I'm going to send home *such* a sausage to Mama by Mr. Ewing—it's like the most beautifully delicate forced meat you ever tasted. Mary would eat a whole one at a sitting I fancy. . . . I don't think I ever appreciated the necessity of temporary spinsterhood (at any rate, if not total) to certain kinds of lives, till I came here!! You may rely upon that and fear no brother-in-law. . . .

P.S.—I fear there's no chance of the contingency Violet suggests—that I should tire of Leipzig and come home before my year!

(12)

To my Mother

October 26 (approx.), 1877.

. . . It was so funny this morning—I had been dreaming that I was at home and showing you the new hat I have bought, and you were saying: ' Well, it looks a great deal better on the head than in the hand '!! when I awoke. I have so often dreamed at home that I was in Leipzig, that this morning, before I knew where I was, I found myself feeling the wall and staring round the room to see if I was in my bed at home or here. I saw that the wall was brown and said to myself ' then I must be in Leipzig,' and dozed off again. In fact often now I wonder if I shan't ' come to myself ' in my bed at home and find I've had a fever or something, like people in books!! The work over that counterpoint told on me a little—tho' the only symptoms are generally sleepiness and disinclination to compose. Of course I took that latter very easily, as often at home I felt ' is it possible that I, who to-day feel like a doll with a mashed turnip for a brain, ever composed?' The inclination always comes again and *en effet* returned to me yesterday when I got on a bit with my new ' Geistinger Sonata ' and wrote a song. (The first sonata is dedicated of course to you, Mother darling.)

The story of the Geistinger Sonata is indeed a queer one—it was begun last Sunday. I had already begun to feel ' verstimmt ' and unimaginative—when . . .

[*Here follows an account of my calling on the Geistinger as described in the text, but of course the slight feeling of disillusionment is not mentioned.*]

. . . You can imagine the effect of this visit! I came home, felt another creature, and forthwith composed I think the best thing I have yet done—the skeleton of a ' first movement ' of a new sonata. It is really programme music, though no one would know it! I have the whole scene there—going up the stairs, the ' Herzklopfen ' at the door, and all!! When it is finished I have secured the services of the best player in the Conservatorium to play it at the Abendunterhaltung. But that may be ages hence. I haven't filled up the first movement yet and don't

feel at all in a ' sonata ' mood at present. I shall show it to Reinecke next Thursday.

The counterpoint master is always urging me to make the acquaintance of some girl who sings well, and get her to sing some of my songs in the Abendunterhaltung. I always put it off but must see about it this week. It's rather a horrid thing to have to do, but as everyone does it I may as well! . . . I could *not* read *all* of your last letter!! The ink was bad. . . .

(13)

October, 1877

. . . Ever so many thanks for your letter, but do you know, Mother darling, it took me more than 20 minutes to read it and almost half a page is still a mystery to me. Do ask Papa to give that horrid cheap blue paper to the children, who write with spider-leg pens, and whose letters are almost readable even when written on that paper. But you write large and black, and it's utterly impossible to make out half your letters unless you wrote on only one side of the paper, and in the end that would be false economy. When Aunt Judy wrote to me from Frimhurst she had to write so, as her hand is also very black. If you write on blue Frimhurst paper, I only get such a short letter, and as one depends a good deal upon letters from home surely he could get some other paper? You see I am rather sore on this subject!! as I have already sent two fruitless appeals to Papa!!! . . .

Last night at the Chamber Music (do you remember at Aunt Louisa's that day our discussion about the ' Chamber pieces ') Saint-Saëns, the great French composer, who besides that is the greatest player I ever heard, bar Rubinstein (though probably he is not so many-sided if one knew him as well), played—and was called back nine times—and played two encores at the end of all things for the benefit of the Conservatorists, who went utterly wild over him, and (when he was here a month ago) sent him a testimonial!! When Saint-Saëns drove away, such a row you never heard. They wanted to take the horses out, and drag him home—luckily for him however (as he was undoubtedly hungry) his coachman drove on at the

first cry of 'Spannt die Pferde ab!!'[1] (While I have been sitting writing this letter at my window, which looks out on the Promenade about 100 yards away, I've seen three dwarfs go by!!! This will give you an idea of the number in Germany. It's horrid.) . . .

(14)

November, 1877.

. . . Poor Professor Brockhaus (brother of my friend) has died of that horrible disease 'trichinosis,' caused by the existence of little animals in pigs—which (when the diseased pigs are made into a particular kind of sausage, eaten almost raw) remain alive in the sausage and eat up the inside of the poor person who has taken that particular sort. With the Professor they settled in the lungs and behind his eyes, so that he first became blind and then died a most painful death. There have been but two instances of death from trichinosis—which is not generally dangerous—but lots of people are ill. Luckily I hate that sort of *Wurst*, and only tasted it once about three months ago, at which time the pigs weren't infected. Now, no Schweinefleisch is eaten in Leipzig—we might be Israelites! . . .

(15)

December, 1877.

. . . Now that the winter is coming on I go a great deal in Gesellschaft, and find that far from making me disinclined to work it gives one a fresh impetus thereto. For of late I have been overworking myself a little and have in consequence been catching it from Frau Brockhaus and her mother-in-law! Hearing so much music 'greift so furchtbar an'[2] as they say here (a very pithy expression). To these Gesellschafts one goes either in ordinary evening dress or in a high dress—like the tussore and blue. Thus the Ascot dress will be most useful, and as it will be worn only by candlelight do you think the fadedness matters? As it is such a, to Germans, marvellous make, if you cannot get it dyed in England without taking it to pieces,

[1] Take out the horses. [2] Takes a lot out of you.

they do them here whole very well and cheaply. Also, Mother darling, would you send me one or two of my long petticoats—petticoat bodices I fancy I have with me—at the bottom of the box among my summer things. If you can, do send the Ascot dress with the other things, as that will come in so useful.

Towards Christmas, darling Mother, I get Heimweh[1] too, and I think oh so often of home and you all. I wish they'd be quick and set up a telephone between Farnborough and Leipzig! But the person who in every way tries to fill the place of Mother to me—who interests herself for me and gives herself more trouble on my account than I can describe to you—who scolds me and tells me I am hopelessly childish and inexperienced—who tells me what to do and what not to do—and who I do believe is getting fond of me—is Frau Eduard Brockhaus of whom I shall always speak as 'Frau Doctor' (her husband is a B.A.). Through her I have an *entrée* into all the best houses in Leipzig and 'move in the circles' (vide Calverley!) after a fashion that would delight Herr Schlösser's heart!! But what I prize more than anything I get through her is her friendship and guardianship. I can go to her beautiful house and sit there and talk to her whenever I have time. I tell her everything I have been after, and whom I have seen, and she always tells me she feels responsible for me! I am indeed in luck to have her for a friend.

Marie Geistinger has returned at last! I was told by someone who had seen her arrival in Leipzig that she left the station in five cabs—one for herself, maid and dog, and four others 'lauter Koffer'!![2] The extensive Garde-robe of course! The other day I met the Director of the Stadt Theater and his wife (great swells) at a party, and that's nice, for if they took a fancy to one, you meet all sorts of interesting people there—including the Geistinger perhaps. . .

Thank you, Mother darling, so immensely for your photo of Hugo—most excellent—but what I want is one of my beauteous Mother. To-day by Frau Dr. B.'s desire I took her all the photos I have of my family, but yours I wouldn't take, as I do so hate to show people such a vile likeness. . . .

[1] Homesickness.

[2] Nothing but trunks.

(16)

December 16, 1877.

My darling Mother,—I've got such a lot to tell you I hardly know where to begin. (I instantly make a large blot down below by way of prologue!) I think I shall keep the best part—the musical—for the end and instantly launch into the dissipations I have been indulging in.

I have told you that my dear Frau Dr. Brockhaus holds all Conservatorists in greatest abhorrence, and I believe she'd like me never to speak with any of them! However there I strike and say one must be friendly with the girls in one's class. Well, her great idea is that by planting me firmly in *her* society (and anyone *protégéed* by her is always kindly treated) I shall escape the shoals and quicksands of Bohemianism in the Conservatorium. So I have now been introduced to all the swells in Leipzig—yesterday I wound up with the Limburgers (German Consul) and Baroness Tauchnitz, a dear very handsome old lady about as tall as Mrs. Oswald Smith. In consequence of this I got an invitation to the 'Professorium'—an entertainment given by the Professors of the University. It consists in the following. You dress yourself as for a small dance in England (I had to put on my black, and Indian scarf), as the floor was said to be dirty and I didn't want to spoil my green silk). The proper thing is for all young girls to go in white, and (bones, red elbows and all) 'ausgeschnitten.'[1] Frau Dr. wanted me to do so, but I rebelled and said I couldn't turn German all at once, and that people would say on seeing my black gown (quite unheard-of for girls here!) 'Eine Engländerin' and pass on. Well, first of all you enter the ball-room and find it filled with rows of chairs arranged in circles—and at the one end a little daïs and thereon a table. When all have arrived, one of the Professors mounts the daïs and delivers an address—sometimes long and stupid—sometimes (then for instance) short and sweet. After this is over a scene of the wildest confusion ensues, for suddenly—apparently from the bowels of the earth, like the demons in the last act of 'Don Giovanni'—the room is filled with waiters bearing long

[1] Décolletée.

tables with which they clear the course, and then follows supper. It consists chiefly in waiting for the next course, but is pleasant on the whole. When this is over the rooms are cleared again and dancing begins. Everything is managed by an omnipotent 'M.C.' and the dance opens with a Polonaise, *i.e.*, a long procession is formed two and two, and then off we go round and round the room, describing all manner of curious evolutions like a big sea-serpent. The Polonaise lasts till the band has had enough of it—and then comes a Valse.

Oh, Mother, I could weep over the waltzing! Any one of my partners would have been turned out of an English ball-room as dangerous. You know how I like to dance—very, very slowly and quietly, in perfect time, beginning at the beginning of the dance, and going on to the end without turning a hair!! Well, imagine me seized upon and whirled round the room, often on the floor, often in mid-air, never at a less rate than 16 miles an hour. Your partner hops nearly up to the ceiling and unless you want all your teeth knocked out you must hop too. No sooner have you pantingly implored to stop a minute than up comes another gentleman and begs for an 'extra tour.' Off you fly again, once round the room, and are delivered over to your original partner who whirls you off again without further delay. If another couple cross the course you promptly send them spinning out of the way (how that used to annoy me at home when any daring partner did such a thing; here no one minds aching shin bones, bruised arms, and loosened teeth—I declare mine felt quite loose at the end of the ball). Everyone bangs, pushes, hops, kicks and jumps with all the good humour in the world and the rather elderly professors are quite as game as the students. Well, after the valse come quadrilles (something like ours), Tyroliennes (sort of Mazurka—where to hop up to the clouds is *the* thing), galops (where to shoot along the room straightforward as if you were skating is *the* thing), and polkas (where to behave as much like a dangerous lunatic as possible is *the* thing); also two or three 'eingeschobene' or extra valses are danced. You may ask, did I not collapse completely before the ball was over?—particularly when I tell you that there is *no* refreshment table and that it is only with great difficulty that you can procure a

glass of raspberry vinegar (which I abhor!). I should certainly have collapsed did not my nationality come to my aid. It is quite unusual to sit and rest between the dances. Directly the dance is over your partner conducts you back to your chaperone, and at that instant up comes your next partner and claims you. You then walk about for perhaps ten minutes, no idea of *sitting*. The theory is that sitting makes you so tired! I pleaded however that in England it was the custom, and that I should have to be borne home on a stretcher if I didn't sit! Next day I was utterly helpless, so was Mrs. Forster.

Have I spoken to you about the Forsters? . . . a young couple who are here for two years. She is a daughter of the celebrated Mrs. Benyon, *chère amie* of Robert Browning (I pointed both out to you that night in Tenterden Street, where Browning got in such a rage with the man who pushed). Mrs Forster I often saw—she was there too and has a face one doesn't forget. Her husband is studying at the University here, and she amuses herself at the Conservatorium. She had a letter of introduction to Mrs. Brockhaus also, so it's very jolly. We go about to these places a good deal together and are very fond of each other. Mrs. Brockhaus declares that some balls are coming to which I *must* go 'ausgeschnitten' and ought to go in white. As I have no white dress here I *can't* go in white, but might have my two dresses, the black and green, cut down low very easily—qu'est-ce que tu en dis?

Now for the musical part! I now have two composition lessons during the week, and yesterday, for the first time, I took some things to Jadassohn (whose new symphony has just been given in the Gewandhaus with much applause). I think I have told you there are but three girls in the Conservatorium besides myself who compose. Well—Jadassohn just said what Henschel and the others said. . . . It has come round to me that he gives out that I am the only really talented composeress he has met in his whole life. . . . I am waiting in great excitement for my box from home. I quite forget what evening dresses I had. If there are any in good repair—*very* good, for Frau B. has eyes like a lynx—please send them, Mother darling. I think all my ball-dresses were danced out! . . .

(17)

December 21, 1877.

My own darling Mother,—I have written in all 12 Xmas letters! (8 to home people!) and now as a *bonne bouche* write my letter to you. Mother darling, I wish you knew how much I am thinking of you all. I don't think you've been out of my thoughts one hour ever since the Xmas season came in, and as Xmas Day draws near I feel more and more the many miles there are between us. A very, very happy Christmas to you, Mother darling, and a bright New Year. Your dear note, announcing the despatch of the box, just arrived. I will tell Frau B. that you would rather I did not go *décolletée* and I'm sure there'll be no difficulty about it. The beautiful white dress will do for Baroness Tauchnitz's grand party on the 14. It sounds much too good for a ball, and certainly shall not be worn at one. . . .

I'm very busy now over a four-part chorale—any amount of Contrapunkt therein. Reinecke himself got quite interested in me last Thursday and set me my work himself, and I told you what Jadassohn (with whom I now also have composition lessons) said of me! Fancy, I am the only woman in the whole Conservatorium who has ever been promoted to composition lessons from Reinecke!! I only lately found that out, and feel two inches taller ever since!!

You know, Mother darling, I am going to send *my* presents at Easter by the Binnings, but I can't resist despatching a box of the wonderful German confectionery only to be got at Christmas. I shan't tell you what they are (except that they are mostly 'marzipan' or whatever you call that stuff that tastes like the almond on wedding-cake), but though they look too awful, fear not. They are from the renowned Wilhelm Felsche, Hof Conditorei in Berlin (to the German Emperor), Vienna (to the Austrian Emperor), Dresden and Leipzig (to the Saxon King), and so on—more renowned that Fortnum & Mason. But as soon as you've tasted them you'll know if they are good or not!

I've been studying the Rondo in my first Sonata (yours) and at last have managed to master it after a fashion, as I suppose I shall have to play something—and that's a taking sort of thing. You will be pleased to hear that despite my

musically unorthodox tendencies the first violin in the Gewandhaus orchestra, old Röntgen said, 'that Rondo thema is so pure and fresh, that I could almost swear it was Mozart'!! I have set my pet poem of Shelley:

'My soul is an enchanted boat
Which like a sleeping swan doth float
Upon the silver waves of thy sweet singing,' etc.

but am not satisfied with it (as *is* Jadassohn!). It is hard to write up to such words.

To-morrow we shall be skating. Last night there were 20 degrees of frost and all day there have been 10 degrees, but the German police are really *too* cautious. However, everyone says this frost will last, as it came so gradually. . . My darling Mother, I wish, I wish I could be with you for Xmas, but it's no good wishing what can't be, and all the telephones in the world couldn't bring me nearer to you than I shall be in thought all next week.

Your ever devoted child.

(18)

December, 1877.

. . . Our holidays last till Wednesday next; however, I began composing a new Sonata yesterday, and mean to finish writing out the Geistinger Sonata to-night. I'll never write anything in C ♯ minor again! The slightest modulation, even into the next key (G ♯ minor) involves no end of double sharps, and the writing out is simply fearful! The second movement is undoubtedly the best thing I've done yet though Reinicke will persist in saying the third is 'better work'!! But really with skating and Xmas week together I'm perpetually on the go. I've been skating hard and, you will be happy to hear, am the best lady skater in Leipzig. I never saw anything like the women here. *Very* few can do the outside edge—and as for cutting figures!! . . . The German gentlemen are much struck of course, and think the English women a more wonderful race even than they did before! I think somehow or other I have improved very much in my skating, though I've not skated for the last two winters, seeing that we've had no ice at home! I go and

practise when the pond is empty—at 9 A.M.—and can do lots of queer things now. . . .

. . . I had great fun at the Rudolf B.'s (up above the Ed. B.'s). They had a sort of dinner at 1.30, and after dinner we all went into the smoking-room (generally in German houses the last of a suite of 4 or 5, so that one can wander in and out at will) and according to student fashion each one sang a song followed by chorus! I had to conduct and was given the feather broom (with which the Italian curiosities I told you about are dusted) as bâton! Afterwards I went down quietly to the Ed. B.'s and we did music. Both the eldest sons who are now home on leave are very musical—respectively sing bass and tenor, and play violin and cello. We did Haydn's trios and sang quartettes of Mendelssohn and Schumann at sight, and I sang with obligato accompaniment, and altogether it was very nice. That's what is so nice about Germany; almost everyone you meet can take a part in a vocal quartett. . . . I'm rather sorry Frau Dr. and the Forsters don't hit it off so very well. Mrs. F. is a great dear, but a little heavy, and wanting in a most essential point, social talent. I mean she doesn't help to make a party go off well, and though she enjoys herself thoroughly doesn't manage to produce that impression! I see Frau Dr. is a little impatient of that particular failing as she herself is so very much the other way. Mr. Forster is fearfully English and finds very little here to his taste, and though I think he tries hard to be cosmopolitan, he can't help showing some of the 'Oh! bother! let's go home!' sort of feeling that besets him so continually! I'm very glad I am of a plastic nature, as plastic natures seem to get so much more fun out of life than stolid ones. . . .

(19)

January 13, 1878.

. . . The Gewandhaus ball was grand fun, very swell. The wife of the Castellan of the Conservatorium had charge of the ladies' room and the respect I am now treated with by the menials and officials in the Conservatorium is most killing. The day after, when I 'resumed my studies,' all those I met enquired with great *empressement* if I had found it agreeable! . . .

I think Frau Dr. B. must feel me rather a responsibility, as firstly I am English, and secondly, I suppose, in the mere fact of the passion that brings me here, not quite like all girls. But I take a real pleasure in pleasing her and now she calls me ' Du ' and is very dear altogether. . . .

. . . I say most unhesitatingly that German beds are the most comfortable in the world. In the winter, if you're a quiet sleeper, springs underneath and feathers (not too many) on the top of you is glory. . . .

The whole river is frozen over, and we are going to make a party and skate down to Connewitz, a village 4 or 5 miles from here—won't it be fun? Frau B. and other elders drive down—meet us there—and we all take tea together at a hotel—but I doubt whether this plan will come off, even if the frost lasts. Skating plans never do come off somehow. . . .

(20)

January 24, 1878.

. . . I am so much distressed that I can't go on working away at my string quartett. My master was so pleased with the first movement. He's been telling lots of people about it, and there it lies, and I haven't the faintest inspiration to go on with it, thanks to this seediness! However, inspiration is a thing that comes and goes like the wind, and one hasn't the remotest idea when and where it will spring up. . . . I do hope my letter to Papa reached and that funds are *en route*. It will be too unpleasant to go penniless into a new *pension*. My address henceforth is Salomon St. 19. That is easy to remember! Solomon spelt with an ' a.' . . .

(21)

Salomonstrasse 19: Early February, '78.

. . . I have to sing my songs everywhere (my voice is in very good form at present for it!). But do you know I never felt more utterly hopelessly distrustful of myself and ashamed of myself than I do now. I can hardly help saying straight out in people's faces what I do say in so

many words: 'Oh yes, that's all very fine, but the question is, will my talent stand cultivation?' Years only can prove that question, for till one is through one's studies and has all one's material there, one cannot tell if one has profited by those studies and can use and shape that material. . . . I *am* sorry about the ferns! I can so well imagine how you went into the porch, with your long Schleppe[1] sweeping into the small pools of water that always were there in the morning, and discovered that the ferns were dead! But I do hope they will revive. . . . Has Papa told Curtis to sit up straight on the box and to drive less like a ratcatcher!!! I do hope his gout is better.

(22)

Late in February, '78.

. . . I waited till to-day to write to you for I wanted to tell you about last night. I was invited to a dinner party at one of the standard Leipzig houses (Brockhaus, Frege, Limburger, Tauchnitz, and Lampe) on purpose to meet Mendelssohn's daughter, Frau Prof. Wach, who, it was prophesied, would take a great deal of interest in me. She is one of the sweetest, most charming little women I ever saw, very pretty and gentle, and has just that charm of manner that made her father so beloved. She is very like him in face—and also exactly like someone we know very well, but I can't think whom. I sang about 12 songs of my own! one after the other and got more petting even than usual!! for the whole company was musical and glad to welcome a new 'Collegin.' Frau Wach was too nice and begged me to come and see her as soon as ever I could, so did some people I've been dying to know for ages but hadn't met before. Brahms stayed with them when he was here. Their name is von Herzogenberg. She is quite lovely—a great musician—very learned—a daughter of the Hanoverian Minister in Berlin, Baron Stockhausen. The Tauchnitz were also there, and the Limburgers, with whom I have lately become very intimate—and where probably my string quartett will be played, if it is finished, before Easter. . . .

The children of this house are very ill brought up, and

[1] Train.

the second day of my arrival the second, aged four, whose perseverance and straight eye cannot be too highly commended, threw a reel of cotton, half a roll, and the handle of an earthenware teapot, one after the other, at my head, despite vehement remonstrance on my part between each volley. Eventually I rushed at the offender and commenced carrying her off to her mama, but she squalled so fearfully that I set her down very firmly on a chair and retired. Since then the infant has held me in great awe, but I heard her whispering to herself the other day, 'Das Fräulein soll Kinder gar nicht gern haben, und junge Damen kann ich nicht leiden!!'[1] I nearly burst out laughing—the child is really clever, for though I was distinctly meant to hear what it said, it looked perfectly unconcerned as if it was soliloquising in solitude!!! . . .

I wish you could see me dancing now, hopping up to the ceiling, arriving on the tips of my toes, looking well over the right shoulder, blowing into the face of my partner, and receiving in exchange many a blast from him—and above all, my left hand not laid on his arm but curled elegantly round, fingers inward, as if a photographer had arranged them!! Onward I fly, backwards, forwards, round the wrong way, and am considered a wonderful dancer!! How I long for a Mr. Young with a long, shooting, easy step (like Paddy's trot 10 years ago) that one can keep up from the beginning of the dance to the end. . . .

(23)

March, '78.

. . . I had such fun the other day. I don't know when I have laughed so much. There was a little *soirée* at the Brockhaus's. As they live next door I couldn't well get a cab (Salomon St. consists of large detached houses with gardens) but it was pouring weather and our garden was a perfect swamp. So what do you think I did? The children here have a very large perambulator on four wheels, and this was brought down from the loft. How I got in I don't know, but it was such a tight fit that my

[1] They say the Fräulein doesn't like children—and I can't bear young ladies.

knees were up to my nose, and I never got down as far as the seat but was wedged between the arms, tight! The whole head and all was then covered with a waterproof and, looking more like clothes coming from the wash than a human being, I was trundled along. I can't tell you how nearly I was upset, as naturally I was too heavy to allow of the Mädchen handling the perambulator as they do generally (pressing the back and elevating the front wheels) and, with the four wheels to contend against, turning corners was perilous work. Just as I entered the portico, two guests arrived on foot whom I knew very well, and who could not make out who or what I was! One, a pompous old Hof-Capellmeister, nearly collapsed when I emerged gorgeous in black and silver out of my vehicle. Since then I am fearfully chaffed and everyone wants to hire the 'droshky von Frl. Smyth!'

By the bye, did I tell you what capital luck I've had about umbrellas? I (of course) lost my nice new silk one about four months after I came here—and to punish myself bought another for four shillings, which I condemned myself to carry about everywhere and which, of course, I did not lose! Well, one day I found in my room a very nice, nearly new, umbrella, mounted on a polished ash-plant —silk of course! Really, I have made most conscientious enquiries about this umbrella and it belongs to no one! and I, of course, have appropriated it! Isn't that splendid? I think perhaps it's Henschel's! It was about the time of his visit that it appeared!! . . .

(24)

March 16, 1878.

. . . Clipsie gives me blooming accounts of my lovely mother—says you looked splendid at the R.M.C. ball in grey silk and white lace and 'so absurdly young!' When I come back it will be very delightful reproducing the old times—sailing into a ball-room with you—though, alas, I shan't know enough people to be detained one instant in the ante-room. . . .

The only thing I object to here is the disorder—the whole thing is what the Germans call a 'liederliche Wirth-

schaft '[1]—meals unpunctual—often too much salt in the bouillon—which is remarked upon every day but nothing comes of it. Then if a curtain gets torn it strikes no one to mend it—you know the sort of thing. One good point about our new landlord is, that he will have fresh roast meat every day, so no more of those wonderful stews and messes that, being in Germany, I always eat and now don't object to, but never shall like!!

. . . I think, Mother darling, I shall be able to pay dressmakers' and doctors' bills out of my songs. At least I shall try. If the money doesn't quite cover the sum it will nearly. Do tell Papa that as for the boots, really the 38s. is economy in the end. The other pair I had in December 1876 at 38s. are only just done for, and that through the skating chiefly—for those Acme skates ruin boots fearfully. I think next year I'd better have a cheap pair of boots made here specially for skating at 12s.! The buttoned boots, single soled, I had before I left home are still like new and look lovely!

Now that the spring is here how I look forward to being at home! Coming back will be quite unlike anything else I ever experienced—and the most heavenly thing I have done in my life as yet—except perhaps when I began to know I hadn't come here in vain.

May you never have anything so fearfully puzzling and confusing to do as writing your first string quartett, Mother darling! My hair is growing grey over it! It will be finished before I come home—and in the meantime do look up 4 performers and we'll have a grand chamber-music performance in the drawing room! . . . I've lost my Counterpoint book and without it am as Samson shorn of his strength. . . .

(25)

April 9, '78.

. . . I am still, besides other work, working away at those songs to take to the printers to-morrow. They are pretty sure to take them as now they are so well known here. Whether they give me much for them is another

[1] Hugger-mugger.

question—or indeed anything! But I hope so. I went to a musical entertainment yesterday evening at the mother of Brahms's other great friend and, in spite of a little cough, did a great deal of singing, till I was forcibly removed from the piano by Frau Brockhaus, who wouldn't allow me to do anything more. I got latish to bed and am dead tired to-day. The weather is so horrid—it snows all day and yet is so warm that only about two inches remain on the ground, and the whole place is a perfect mash! Yesterday, knowing how I rave about Brahms, the daughter, Frau von Bezold, sought out a visiting card of his and hid it under the card with my name on! When I found it, they hunted up a piece of narrow pink tape to match my ribbons, and tied it round my neck!. . .

(26)

April, 1878.

. . . Just imagine what a goose I am. I went to Breitkopf and Härtel—the music publishers *par excellence* in the world. The nephew, who conducts the business, Dr. Hase, I know very well and he is quite one of the most charming men I ever met. But you know how unpleasant it is to do business with a personal friend! Well, he began by telling me that songs had as a rule a bad sale—but that no composeress had ever succeeded, barring Frau Schumann and Fräulein Mendelssohn, whose songs had been published together with those of her husband and brother respectively. He told me that a certain Frau Lang had written some really very good songs, but they had no sale. I played him mine, many of which he had already heard me perform in various Leipzig houses, and he expressed himself very willing to take the risk and print them. But would you believe it, having listened to all he said about women composers, and considering how difficult it is to bargain with an acquaintance, I asked no fee! Did you ever hear of such a donkey! I should have asked £2 10s., which would have dissolved one of the dressmaker's bills! So if, Mother darling, after all I have to come down on you for that bill (which I still hope not to do!) please consider it the price of my modesty! . . .

(27)

Sunday, April 7, 1878.

. . . I think, Mother darling, Frau Dr. would be very pleased if you wrote her a letter thanking her for her goodness to me and mentioning her letting me come for a few days to her in the country. Of course you would have written anyhow, but probably not till I came to England. If you wrote at once (very clearly!! but in English of course!) she'd get it just before starting. She always takes such an interest in my home—and you especially—I can't talk to her too much about you all and my home-life. With most people one feels rather shy of 'letting out' (as F—— P—— would say) on the subject. One always is afraid of boring them—but I never feel that with her, as I know that the more I tell her, the better she is pleased.

My newer friends, Baron von Herzogenberg and his fabulously beautiful wife (with a bad figure! the Tauchnitzes and Marie Geistinger are the only people in Leipzig with figures!) are very delightful. They hold very much aloof from Leipzig society—partly because in both is a rooted dislike, almost amounting to a horror, of dilettantism. She is absurdly musical and though she doesn't compose much (only songs), is the first feminine musical genius (bar Frau Schumann) that I have met. I suppose the fact that Joachim, Brahms, and Frau Schumann are their most intimate friends makes them so severe upon unthoroughness. In their presence I feel like a worm! . . . I mean because I write sonatas and string quartetts, and, goodness knows what all, when I can't do a proper canon or fugue (or indeed strict counterpoint very well). I have made gigantic progress, but not thorough progress. I have, in fact, made the tour of the world and don't know my own country thoroughly so to speak. . . .

(28)

Passion Week, 1878.

. . . The day before yesterday I made the acquaintance of a composer of Schumann's time, of whom Schumann prophesied almost as much as he did of Brahms. You

see in the one case the prophecy came truer than in the other, for Kirchner never composed anything great, though his little things are beautiful. I used to play some of them. Fräulein Sitte will probably know his Album Blätter and Aquarellen. He is exactly like Mr. Ewing! As his life is, to a certain extent, a failure, he is a very bitter, intensely sardonic man—almost demoniacal. He spoke much of the industry of the English in the Conservatorium—how nearly all the ladies composed!! You can imagine how pleasant this was for me! and that I wasn't much disposed to obey his command (for command it was) to play to him. When I had done, he simply growled out: 'Immer weiter! *Sie* dürfen componiren!'[1] People say this is fearfully much for Kirchner! After that he was most friendly and offered to see me home and goodness knows what! . . .

(29)

End of April, 1878.

. . . I had such a glorious time at Dresden with dear Frau Doctor, and I should have stayed there till the middle of this week (when she returns) were it not for a concert given by the Bach Verein, to which, as you know, I belong —and as the *alti* are weak and I can make a pretty good row in the chest notes now, back I came, upon the summons of the beautiful Frau von Herzogenberg.

. . . And now I must tell you all about my adventures, looking up Julia Finn.[2] I searched out the name in the address book, found it in a not very nice street in Dresden, and, obtaining leave of absence from my hostess, sallied forth in search of a new cousin. I was shown into a drawing room, the decorations of which evidently aimed at English style (German drawing rooms are got up as English parlours at the seaside) but were of a somewhat gaudy, cheap, description. Thought I to myself, 'Louie's sister has not Louie's taste' and awaited with anxiety the arrival of Cousin Julia. My dear Mother, imagine my feelings when

[1] Go on! *You* may compose!

[2] This was a first cousin of my mother who had eloped in her teens with her brother's tutor.

a small, dingy, eminently 'respectable' person entered and asked me what I wanted!! Having previously asked the servant if Mrs. Finn was English and having received an affirmative answer—having also ascertained that there was but one Finn in the address book—I could not doubt but this was my cousin, though she bore no resemblance to Louie!! I advanced timidly and said, 'I think you must be my cousin Julia.' 'Oh,' answers the person, 'I think yer must be makin' a mistake. Yer mean my sister-in-law, Miss Durrant as was, 'oose no longer in the town—lives in Blasewitz!' (a village about 3 miles from Dresden). I was rather shocked at this apparition, who begged me to wait till her 'usband came in. Presently, an equally dingy but well-meaning individual in black came in and informed me that 'Aunt Julia' had removed from Dresden 2 years ago and that if I'd like to see her he'd be happy enough to accompany me out by tramway. The good soul (who lectures in German in Dresden and of whom I hope people think as much as he does of himself) accompanied me to the village and led me to a small cottage, out of which comes a stout, not so very ugly lady, greets him with a kiss and Louie's voice to $\frac{1}{8}$th of a tone, and looks politely at me for information. I said, 'I am Ethel Smyth,' whereat she embraced me very warmly and said, 'You dear child! I'm so glad to make your acquaintance,' just as Louie would have said it. The brother-in-law said, 'Well, I'm not wanted 'ere, so I'll say good-day,' and we parted on the best of terms, and I think he is a capital old fellow, though shaky as to h's.

She carried me off indoors, made me stay to lunch of course, and introduced me to her husband—a dear little man, also shaky as to h's, but much 'finer,' as the Germans say, than his brother. I think I had never pictured anyone more correctly to myself than I pictured her. She is very stout, has lost her eyebrows in some fever, and has corked herself rather crooked ones—otherwise no beautification, and a nice fresh complexion. Fringe like a door mat, also over the ears, so the effect is most . . . festive! On the top, a brilliant Paris bonnet, and a somewhat violent yellowish grey cape with ostrich feathers—this when she accompanied me home; in the house an infuriated looking mob cap crowns the edifice of brown hair. She has one

awful daughter as black as coal and very Jewish looking, with an unwholesome looking complexion, and one jolly little son of 9. Both talk English with a strong German accent and rather stiffly, and are, of course, at home in German. I can't tell you how hearty and jolly she was and how glad she seemed to see me. I also was so glad to meet with a relative like the people I know in England—not like the awful Leipzig English. Her voice and manner are so like Louie's that I had a queer home-ish feeling when talking to her that I have not had since I left England.

I don't think for the whole 3 hours I was there we spoke of Germany or the present—but entirely of the past, and all about you. She could not tire of telling me about you and the old times, and I can't tell you with what a feeling I listened. She is the first person I ever met, with whom I had time to talk and opportunity of talking about you when you were young, and she enjoyed her task of narrator as thoroughly as I did mine of listener. It was all about you at Rackheath and Scottow—how beautiful you were—how you sang as no one else, except, perhaps, the Lind—how you were in all respects just her *beau idéal* (and everyone else's) of what a young lady should be—of how you had such masses of adorers, and how your behaviour to them was just what it ought to have been! She said you used to have singing days, on which you sang up and down stairs and all over the house, and that she had (if all this is true you will know better than I, for romancing runs in the Stracey blood, doesn't it?) a great passion for you and used to come up to your room when you were dressing for dinner and fasten on your bracelets—until one day, when she came upon you and Papa in a certain room of which she showed me the windows in a photo she has of Scottow! That same night, she says, when she was helping you to adorn, she said, deeply wounded and jealous: 'Really, Cousin Nina, I can't think how you can kiss that man with red hair,' whereat you boxed her ears and said, 'How dared she speak so of your future husband!!!!!' She said you had such perfect manners and were so horrified (as indeed is to be expected) at some youth who, after asking you to take wine with him, shovelled up peas on his knife! She also related the tale of your saying, 'My nose is like a torch!' She spoke much of the

trios sung by you, her Mother (about whose flute-like voice she raves—I never knew Aunt Julia sang) and either Lady Robinson or Mrs. Burney-Petre. . . . Again, I say, the pleasure it was to me hearing all this is absolutely inexpressible, so much so that I don't care to tell you about Dresden and the glorious (gaudy) new Theatre, and the splendid performance of Schiller's 'Wilhelm Tell.' (The Picture Gallery was shut for cleaning up! Such a sell!) If I go again at Whitsuntide I'm of course to look her up. She told me to tell you she was delighted to see me, and that I was exactly like my father, only your eyes to a T! Whereat I demur, first of all my eyes are not half so good as my Mother's, and, secondly, they are quite a different sort of eye! Yours are oval, mine somewhat round! They all accompanied me in the ferry across the Elbe (Blasewitz is opposite Löschwitz—the village the 'Berg' is in), and then walked with me till we got to the Berg. I was awfully pleased with her and very curious to hear what you say of her as she was in days gone by. She seemed rather hurt at never having heard of you till last year, but said she supposed that comes of living at Dresden. . . .

(30)

[*Note.—This letter was written by and dictated to Lisl who was nursing me. Her own remarks are in italics.—E.S.*]

May 19, 1878.

My darling Mother,—Don't be alarmed at seeing a strange handwriting—I'm in bed, but not sick 'unto death,' my nerves have been rather knocked up for some time and now my unhappy heart has to bear the brunt of it. I have been sent to bed in order to reduce the palpitation and here may have to stay for a day or two longer, in all about a week. Don't think, Mother darling, that I have been left entirely on my own hook. I have been nursed during this week as well as I ever was in my life, both night and day, but as the instrument of my recovery happens to be writing this for me, I will tell you all about it when I can write to you myself. *The poor amanuenis is suffering*

severely from writing the accompanying! And now, please Mother, listen attentively to what's coming. . . .

[*N.B.—Here follows a long account of my illness and of the restrictions to be observed in England.*]

Well, that's about all. It only remains to tell you not to be anxious about me. You'll find me looking as well as ever, and, alas, as inclined to gather the rosebuds while I may as of yore. I am fairly on the road to recovery and will get up to-morrow.

Ever your devoted child,
ETHEL.

Amanuensis cannot help saying that she enjoyed nursing your dear, dear child so very much; also she must assure you that you have not the least occasion more to be discomforted about Ethel.

(*P.S. privately added by me.*)

Mother darling,—The person who has written my letter to you and nursed me all through this illness more like a mother than anyone else is Frau von Herzonberg. What she has been to me I can't tell you and I have known her hardly three months. It's queer that Frau Dr. isn't nursing me—but she is so good about it. I daren't write more, it's forbidden me. I can't now tell you all she's done for me!!

(31)

May 27, 1878.

. . . At last I am up and able to write to you with my own hand, but just fancy, with pauses about every three minutes, as writing brings on the attacks more than anything almost. . . . I have at last seen the absolute necessity of acquiescing in the matter of my *modus vivendi* during the holidays and have signed a paper of rules the doctor prescribes for me. Imagine—no lawn tennis, no riding, no dancing, no nothing!! This to me, who have all this year been looking forward to plunging with renewed vigour into the old life for a little bit, and have been glorying in the feeling that I could face the holly hedge on the green, or an adversary at lawn tennis

without fear—that after I had been a week in home air the old Adam would be fully re-established in me! Still it is true that is nothing against a life-time—and I know it must be! . . .

I am much disgusted that I shall have to hurry over an important matter, i.e., choosing the souvenirs of Leipzig for the folks at home. I meant to have spent a whole month in looking about, and now probably the matter must be got over in a day or two. Such is life. Also I meant to have spent the fortnight previous to my departure in practising up various of my perfectly unplayable compositions to (I hope!) delight the maternal ear. Instead of which I am not allowed to touch a piano, and as I can't help it when it stands there, the Doctor says better send it away!! So, Mother darling, you must put up with them as they are—in rough—and when you hear them listen to the composition, not the performance of the same! I can't realise that I shall see you all again so soon. It is almost too good to be true, that is to say if it comes off. Fancy if Mary is still there, which I hope she will be! . . .

(32)

Friday Night, June 7, 1878.

. . . I will send on your note to Frau v. H., who is far away in Bohemia and will be so glad to have it. She was always saying—specially while cooking something for me—'What fun it would be if your Mother were to walk in suddenly, except that I fear I should not be here in her place then!' which she certainly would not have been.

. . . Oh! Mother I hope the rules may be a little relaxed. But the worst of it is I have promised my dear German Doctor on my word of honour, signed a paper to that effect which I must show you when I get home, and unless he absolves me I fear I can't relax! But we will see and I will hope on. Otherwise I often suddenly burst out into vehement howling at the bare idea of it, as I know my year's devotion to the Muses has not affected my love for field sports, to which I know I have just as much natural bent as to music. I'll jump over the lawn tennis net for Captain S——'s benefit once more before I leave home again!

. . . Do tell Miss Sitte that when I am in England I shall be so glad to have her to remind me of dear, dear Germany, and I hope she will let me talk German with her sometimes, that I may not quite forget it when there, though I know what a trial it is to have foreigners talking one's own language with one, when one is perfect mistress of the language of the country one is in. Though not perfect mistress of German by any means I can of course talk it as fast as I like, and nothing annoys me so intensely as when people insist upon talking bad English with me in Germany. Still perhaps Frl. Sitte will talk German with me out of good-nature.

(*b*)

FROM ELISABETH VON HERZOGENBERG ['LISL']

[*Note.—These early letters of Lisl's are given mainly to show the key in which our friendship started; what I may call the real letters, written when we came to know each other thoroughly, will be found later. As she often lapses into English I put 'in English' when I am transcribing, and 'in German' when translating. She once said she knew her English style was a blend of baby-language and Dr. Johnson, and often she uses it with comic intention; at other times the comic effect is involuntary.*]

(1)

Schloss Wernsdorf, Bohemia: May 27, 1878.

(*In German.*) My dear, dear Ethel,—I hope you have got my two greetings, one written in Leipzig, another from Aussee, so that you hadn't to wait as long as you expected for a line from me. I cannot forgive myself for causing you so much agitation the last day; any good I may have done seems to me nullified by this last action! But I know you won't agree, and that your loving heart magnifies what I did for you and underestimates the delight it was to me

doing it. Surely one would have no heart in one's bosom were it not among the intensest of pleasures to be able to help someone dear to you; to begin with, how soothing to one's vanity to find oneself so important, so longed for! . . .

Ethel, I won't make myself out worse than I am, but really the last 14 days were such a delight, gave me so much pleasure, that I often felt quite dishonorable in calmly pocketing, as if I deserved them, the thanks that poured so generously from your mouth. Don't go on thanking me but let us both thank Fate that meant so well by us on that memorable birthday of Dr. Paul's! I confess I do not look upon it as a misfortune that you became so ill, that is to say that you had this acute attack; firstly because I don't think you would otherwise have been as careful as you will be now, secondly because I doubt if we should ever have got where we are now but for those 14 days.

(*In English.*) After to-morrow I hope to receive the first bulletin, and perhaps—more and dearer to me—the first lines from your own little hand. My darling, did the horrid men come already to take away the piano? and are you growing daily pale and paler from obligatory *Askese*?[1] And do you very much long after all you have not, poor little ill-treated, though tenderly loved child? And what does Dr. Langbein say about the term of your departure, and will Miss Nancy be sure to wait till you can start safely without an etiquette sticking on your back bearing the word 'fragile'? Write to me soon, dearest!

I am not quite here yet. I never feel comfortable at first; I can't get accustomed to Heinrich's sister—so unlike to him, the Graces not having attended her cradle; without the touch of tenderness without which it is so difficult to me to think of a woman. Good, courageous, upright, and all that, but very matter of fact. I like the children and the 170 sheep here best, also a large good Newfoundland dog with quite a way to remind one of some of Longfellow's nice little poems—Open Window and that sort. He has such a wonderful condescending way of looking on the children when they play with him. Of course he feels his superiority. They have a bird here in a cage hanging in a tree in the garden—think what a

[1] Self denial.

cruelty!—that reminds me of a certain poor little Euphorion[1] when in a short time it will be at home, looking on with folded arms when the others play lawn tennis! I really do feel how cruel we are, Langbein and I, and yet how necessary our cruelty is.

Good-bye and my blessing to you, my darling. I won't write again till I have a letter from you. My love to Miss Nancy; it is *such* a comfort to me to know you are to journey together. Tell her how I confide in her. Take care of my little Ethel for the sake of your mother.

LISL.

P.S.—I don't want B—— to know yet that we call each other 'du'; yet how should she unless you leave letters about? And I even ask myself if it is not a pity for others to know, and perhaps make inward remarks or smile—oh! or to ask if one . . . but in fact what do I care? I have forgotten how to call Ethel 'Sie'——!

(2)

May 29, 1878.

(*In English.*) Here is my song. Now don't be thinking I do not know that the doubled leading-note on the second page, first bar ('fallt, ihr dürren Blätter') is, in fact, false and nasty, and an unclean matter altogether unworthy the wife of Aloysius[2]; but in spite of that I can't help finding it expressive, and that it gives the touch of a certain harshness that I want there; for which reason Aloysius has graciously permitted it as what the Catholics call a 'lässige Sünde!'[3] Poor little song it appears to me, when I see it black on white, so poor and meagre and childish! and still I have a kind of tenderness for it; also because I played it to my husband long before he was my husband, in March '67, when I saw him for the last time before *the* time from which I began a new reckoning. And he wanted a copy of it, which of course I never gave him, laced up in the Spanish boots of conventional holding-back as poor Lisl was at that time! There my darling—deal kindly

[1] Child of Faust and Helen of Troy (in Part II of Goethe's *Faust*), who came to grief through wilfulness and daring: a nickname of Lisl's for myself.

[2] A nickname she gave her husband.

[3] Venial sin.

with it—this is all I can do for my child to-day. Henry sends you his love, a special message. He likes you *very* much. . . . My Aunt Wüllerstorf is a dear aunt but oh! such an excitable one. How can people be so un-calm? . . . But I love her dearly. . . .

(3)

May 31, 1878.

(*In German.*) . . .I must just tell you an absurd dream I had, which however will show you where my thoughts are at night. I was spending the evening with the Röntgens, but Johanna was not there, and I said to myself: 'Of course she's looking after Ethel.' We were to make music and I was to play 2nd violin in a Beethoven Quartett (to which apparently I was quite accustomed) but they gave me a shockingly written MS. part—all wrong too—so that presently Papa Röntgen lost patience and stopped. I apologised profusely but said the part was really disgraceful, and also nearly illegible, owing to the masses of blotting-sand on it which made it look like a cutlet fried in breadcrumbs. (Observe this dreadful irruption of cooking into music,—picture of my unfortunate Sphinx-nature!) Thereupon Johanna came in and I rushed at her and asked after Ethel. 'Ethel is not at all well and must probably stay in bed to-morrow too.' And I: 'How is that? What have you been up to?' Then Johanna drew forth a long list with all her crimes written on it, and confessed that the worst one was meeting Aunt Wüllerstorf in the street and taking her to see Ethel. 'What!' I cried out, 'that excitable aunt? that aunt who never, never is allowed to go near a sick person? I must go to Ethel at once'—and I rushed away in terrible agitation, and woke up still quite upset by the dream. Dear good Johanna must not be angry with me! it is all because she was so remorseful one day for having gone to see you in the Salomonstrasse at a time when visitors were forbidden! . . .

(4)

June 2, 1878.

(*In German*) . . . Don't write long letters; it's bad for you and I can't write at length myself here. The Minuet

form is best suited to us just now—1st Part: 16 bars; 2nd Part: 16 bars; a little Trio; repeat the Minuet and add a nice little Coda for the special edification of

YOUR MOTHER.

(5)

June 9, 1878.

(*In German.*) . . . Don't feel like that about returning to England. In a way I myself feel as if we were 'drifting farther and farther from each other,' but that cannot change the fact that we love one another, that I 'had you' when I was 11, and shall have you till I'm 80—and that's such a good feeling! . . . My child, I wonder sometimes at the different ways Fate spins the thread which binds people together—how it often takes years to enter into possession, and how in our case something has grown between us that tells me we belong together, inseparably! . . . To think how I hung back at first! I didn't know you and am in principle against new friendships; then too there was a feeling of unfaithfulness towards other people whom I knew better than you. I thought I was merely attracted by little ways that appealed to me, and said to myself: 'You must look closely and weigh well.' . . . And now, there you are, little tree, grown into my heart with such deep roots that nothing can ever tear them out! And I gladly own to myself that things are thus, because I have studied you so closely and believe I know you so thoroughly! . . . (*In English.*) Yes, I have been photographed by the best man in Vienna, and I think in all four positions I'll have a big nose, for the atelier was hot which always produces big noses. But you should not be photographed again. I will not have you become a waister—or do you say spendthrift? (have I hit the word now?) and would hold you a sermon but that I fell very week and touched and melting away like butter in the sun. I am frightened of the temptations at your home—no riding, no tennis, a Pilgrim's Progress indeed—and anxious to hear how you pass through the tests, poor little Pamina, quite alone without a Tamino to help you—only the Magic Flute of your affection for me, and Music, that dear consoler, as sole support! I don't like your beginning by those races! Of course your fanatic passion for horses must

have the effect to excite you when you look on at such racings, that in themselves are so exciting; and really it isn't necessary, now is it? You can show off your new little hat (for two pounds) when you make your calls of arrival (? *Antritts-Visiten* I mean). Darling don't be angry, I know *you* don't care about all that stuff, and prefer sitting at home, since you cannot play tennis, at your writing table and your piano, but the kind mother will of course try to make show of her daughter, and in this respect you will, I believe, have the hardest battles to fight. . . .

CHAPTER XXII

Summer 1878

The journey to England *via* Rotterdam and Harwich, punctuated by postcards and telegrams to and from Lisl at every available stage, is chiefly memorable as the most appalling of all my many Channel crossings. Nancy and I shared a cabin and her sufferings were terrific; but just when I was beginning to reflect with alarm that people have been known to die under these circumstances, a calm voice below me remarked: 'I think the horrors of sea-sickness are much exaggerated.' My father met us at Harwich, and we started for our respective homes by a line built apparently on the switch-back principle—my first experience of this detestable effect of a rough sea voyage.

What a wonderful return home it was! Invalid and incipient 'Phœnix,' as mother persisted in calling me sometimes, I was spoiled to my heart's content, the children, whom I called my white slaves, fetching and carrying for me, and even lacing up my boots. The glamour of home, which even at Leipzig had never paled, seemed positively dazzling; how well I remember the flavour of it all—the incredible youth and jollity of the young ones, the lovingness of mother, the beloved dogs and horses! I had not expected much cordiality from my father towards an unrepentant and apparently justified rebel, but the fact that my allowance had not been exceeded by one penny, together with the less important one of countless testimonials to my seriousness of purpose, went a long way, and I found the life I had chosen was an accepted fact.

But presently, when the novelty wore off, I began to review the situation with dismay. My Leipzig doctor had drawn up a document which might have been headed by the word dear among all others to the German heart, 'Verboten,' for it was a list of forbidden joys that included, with the exception of work (which was permitted in moderation), all the things I loved best, namely tennis, riding, and dancing. I had shed what seemed to Lisl inconceivably childish tears over this document, but solemnly signed it, as did she and Dr. Langbein. Hardly had I been ten days at home, however, when all the worst symptoms disappeared by magic, and I began to kick against the pricks. The matter was complicated by a rather comic infusion of jealousy. No one ever rejoiced at heart more unselfishly than my mother at any kindness shown to her children, and for Lisl's love and care of me (as previously for Frau Doctor's) she was deeply and touchingly grateful. Nevertheless when it came to my life at home being regulated by far-off strangers, when her wondering ears heard me refusing even to handle a racquet for fear of temptation, although it was plain to sensible English judgment that there was no longer any reason why I should not play, this was more than her philosophy could bear; and I cannot help thinking that when she suggested I should see Sir William Jenner and be formally released from my promises, her motives may have been more complex than appeared.

There was a very funny incident a week or two later, when, just to see if my eye was still in, and standing firmly rooted to one spot, I made my sisters serve to me, my mother, unknown to us, watching the proceedings from her bedroom window. At luncheon she remarked with obvious satisfaction: 'I see you *have* begun tennis again in spite of Frau von Herzogenberg,' whereupon I angrily declared it was not so, and that taking a serve or two was not playing tennis—to which she rejoined that it seemed to her uncommonly like it. In short there was such a scene that, much to my surprise, Papa suddenly broke in with: 'You don't understand the game; she says she was

not playing and there's an end of it.' And as usual when he intervened she gave in at once. Eventually, in spite of impassioned remonstrance from Lisl, including the quotation of many a slighting remark I had rashly made at Leipzig about English doctors, all embargoes were removed, and the day came when I joyfully informed her, whom the news left more than indifferent, that my game was as good as ever, in fact better.

To the end I never succeeded in making her grasp what games and sport mean to people of our race; that side of life seemed to her trivial, or at least unworthy the passionate interest of a budding artist. When I had told her in my sick room that the family were requested never to mention hunting in their letters, because the very word drove me wild with longing, I remember her amazed look as she said: 'My dear child, you must surely be mad!' And though she eventually learned to accept these aberrations with philosophy, they belonged in the large category of 'things in you I shall never understand.'

That summer a ridiculous sequel to one of my Leipzig adventures took place. When I had parted some months before on terms of grateful but strictly platonic affection from the kind young man who had conducted the sale of 'grandeurs' in the famous libel case, we had settled that he should come and see me in my own home, which he did. But what was my astonishment when, in the course of a ride together, it became clear that he had construed this invitation into an encouragement to persevere in his suit! I don't think I have ever been more angry; from the first I had seen he was in earnest, and whoever I had flirted with it certainly was not with him; consequently my diatribes concerning male fatuousness and vanity—none the less stunning for being shouted over my shoulder at full gallop—seemed to me amply justified. He was deeply hurt, and we parted with stiffness on both sides.

I did a certain amount of what I regret to say was referred to in letters to Lisl as 'that horrid counterpoint,' and knew she was similarly employed. But under what

ideal circumstances! Ensconced peacefully in a mountain district, with her Aloysius, as we called him, at her elbow, (Aloysius being a Jesuit noble of the Middle Ages who forsook the world for higher things and was eventually canonised) naturally she made rapid progress; whereas the exercises I sent from time to time, including those on the bird-call I quoted, were far from satisfactory and few in number, the blame of course being laid by both of them on balls, tennis, and general frivolity. One letter of remonstrance apparently made me 'howl,' and altogether caused such despair that Aloysius himself felt moved to write and administer consolation. But our whole early correspondence testifies to the grave, beneficent influence exercised by Lisl.[1]

On one thing I had set my heart, to give my mother one great musical pleasure, and eventually decided on a home-production of the Liebeslieder Walzes. I beat up in the neighbourhood and at Aldershot four people with ears, voices, and feelings, into whom it was possible to drum the vocal parts, and a really musical Russian woman to help in the Piano Duet accompaniment. It was like teaching parrots, but the result was an excellent performance—in Mrs. Longman's opinion as good as anything you could hear in London, and it may be remembered that she was considered an authority. Later on I went to stay with Alice and Mary, and actually pulled off the same feat in Edinburgh with new performers and equal success.

Lisl, who was seeing a good deal of Brahms just then, told him all about this propaganda work of mine and all about me, which of course filled me with mingled terror and delight. She informed me too that he was in his best mood—'treats me so kindly, as a dear, big Newfoundland dog treats a little King Charles,' and since I may have uncomplimentary things to say about Brahms by and by, it will be a pleasure to quote later on some very warm tributes she pays him, to which I heartily subscribe.[2] She

[1] Appendix III., ii. p. 18, Nos. 2, 7, 12 *et seq.* [2] Appendix III., ii. p. 23.

generally used English in the lighter parts of her letters, German in the others, and aware of my own recklessness as to leaving correspondence about, as also of my mother's jealousy, I had begged her to 'tell me' in English and 'speak to me' in German. I even went farther. By way of discouraging requests to let mother see one of my friend's letters I once threw a wholly German one on to her lap, saying: 'do read this, it's so amusing.' As I expected, the caligraphy defeated her, and I was asked to read it aloud instead, which I did—with omissions.

. . . . . .

Meanwhile, as the summer went on, the old feeling of the staleness and pointlessness of home life came back, and with it a furious longing for Leipzig and my new friends, to cheat which I warmed up a few former enthusiasms. . . . (Lisl's first intimation of what was to be a perennial subject of dispute between us, my insatiable appetite for humanity.) About this time, too, the aftermath of enlarging Frimhurst was beginning to be reaped. My father announced that we had for some time been exceeding our income, but it seemed impossible to work up zeal for a whole-hearted scheme of retrenchment. This theme was the source of constant and fruitless sparring, and of course the old friction between me and my mother began again, with the very natural element of soreness as to foreign influence thrown in.

Again, though I was no longer exactly a black sheep in my father's eyes, he seemed to me wilfully antagonistic, and I wrote miserably to Lisl that I was becoming wicked at home—hard and rebellious; that I never should learn self-control and that there was 'a perfect devil in my heart that sleeps only at Leipzig.' In fact I could hardly await the end of the holidays, particularly as I had finished a bit of work that I felt certain would please Aloysius better than my counterpoint, namely, 'Variations on an Original Theme,' one of the variations being inspired by, and named after, the filly I had broken. Mercifully, as in the old days, the friction between me and my mother

was presently forgotten in her perfect appreciation of this early effort and my consequent delight in the depth of her musical instinct! I remember flinging my arms round her and saying, ' You are more musical than all my friends put together,' which in a sense was perfectly true. Thus, at the end of September, in a glow of restored affection and harmony, I left for Germany, this time being allowed without remonstrance to travel under my own wing.

CHAPTER XXIII

Autumn and Winter 1878

During the previous winter I had met one of Brahms's oldest friends, a deeply musical and most unprofessorial Saxon named Engelmann, who nevertheless held a Professorship at the University of Utrecht, and whose wife, originally a professional pianiste, was said to be one of the finest artists alive. Both of them were old friends, too, of the Herzogenbergs, and as he had suggested my coming to see them on my way back to Leipzig I did so, and spent an enchanting week, sight-seeing and music-making.

Off the music stool my hostess was a pleasant, childlike, not very interesting little person, who seemed to spend most of her time laughing at nothing in particular; at the piano the whole woman changed, and you were in presence of a grave, inspired, passion-wrought pythoness. Her husband was an admirable cellist, and in that house I heard, among other things, the Brahms Piano Quartetts, the Quintett, and the Horn Trio as I shall never hear them again. We were quite among ourselves, except for Julius Röntgen who came over from Amsterdam to see me, and incidentally played viola. In a couple of days Frau Engelmann knew my Variations by heart, and I learned what one's compositions can become in the hands of a great artist.

This was my first visit to Holland; I was shown many beautiful things, among them the desolate Dead Towns on the Zuyder Zee, where strange, unfriendly fishermen in fantastic costumes, with long, straight, coal-black locks

hanging into their eyes, squat all day in the streets, glaring hatred at intrusive strangers. I remember too how we scorned a very smart Amsterdam bankeress, who strutted about the deck of the steamer in brown boots, the first any of us had seen. We thought them ridiculous and unpleasantly 'auffallend,'[1] and so apparently did the other people on the boat.

Two days later I was back in Leipzig. Driving straight to the Humboldt Strasse, where the Herzogenbergs lived, I appeared unexpectedly in their flat just as they had sat down to breakfast, and noticed that Lisl turned ashen—the effect, as I then learned, of any surprise, whether pleasant or the reverse. I remember that the spectre of her dread infirmity rose before me for a moment, to vanish in the three-part counterpoint of our Wiedersehen. They overwhelmed me with congratulations on my stalwart, healthful, sun-browned appearance, for of course they had never seen me in my normal country-life condition and found me almost unrecognisable. My toilette had been performed in the train, my luggage left at the station, and under my arm was a parcel, the contents of which would, I hoped, banish all recollection of contrapuntal failures. And so it turned out; the Variations pleased them as much as they had the Engelmanns, and far from being taken tragically, as I had half expected, the 'Filly' variation was considered one of the best of the bunch. Then a new Brahms Motett, of which she had spoken in a letter,[2] was played to me, followed by some new work of Heinrich's, till, about half an hour before the midday meal, Lisl disappeared to see to something in the kitchen, while he examined and discussed the Variations in detail. And when, after one of the admirably cooked meals which were the secret pride of that little household, we arrived at the sweet stage, what did I see but the 'Süsse Speise' I love best in the world, the dish which to this day I cannot

[1] Conspicuous.

[2] Appendix, III., ii. p. 23.

perceive advancing in my direction or mentioned on a *menu* without emotion . . . méringues—called at Frimhurst and throughout English kitchens ' marrangs '! I had once written from home that whatever the differences between my mother and myself we were of one mind on that subject, and Lisl had determined to show me what the hands that had just been delicately disentangling and re-combining the ingredients of a Motett in I forget how many parts could do with eggs and sugar—for the méringues were her handiwork, cases and all. Not too sweet, not too sticky (which however is better than too powdery), the cream neither over solid nor yet whipped into fluff, in a word, and without hyperbole, masterpieces! . . .

After dinner, for Germans dined then at midday, I collected my luggage, and Lisl and I drove off to the Salomonstrasse. The old house was transmogrified; the stairs had been mended, the walls re-papered, and the whole place looked fresher and cleaner than one would have believed possible. The windows of my new rooms faced south-west, looking over fruit-trees and acacias, and I suppose never was young musician more ideally and cheaply lodged. By the next day I had rigged up a grand trophy, consisting of racquets, skates, fox-brushes, a hunting-crop, and my long boot-hooks, which roused the admiration of my landlady's children—a well-brought-up set of youngsters this time, who all started a discreet ' Schwärmerei ' for me. Frau Merseburger, their mother, was a jolly, buxom, pleasant-faced woman of about thirty-five, with a dried-up, immensely polite little husband anywhere between fifty-five and seventy. Publisher and bookseller on a very small scale, the strong line of the firm was school books, and gaudily got up little volumes of very minor lyrics which reminded me of my great-uncle the Professor's effusions. He gave me one or two of these in case I should feel tempted to set extracts to music, and I then wondered, as always, how stuff on that level manages to get into print at all. The only other lodger was a big, shy man of about forty with a huge fair beard and spectacles. He had a

room on the ground-floor, mine being on the second, and contrived by deft dartings in and out of the house, and cautious tactics in passages, to be as good as invisible. I noticed that Frau Merseburger was rather embarrased and apologetic about this lodger, why I could not imagine, but as she married him when old Merseburger died a few years later, I have since hazarded a guess.

As I said, I supped in my own room, but on a few grand occasions, Herr Merseburger's birthday and so on, I was invited down below, the other lodger occasionally being present too. Once we were favoured with the company of a nephew of my landlord's, stoker or something of the sort on an ocean tramp, who was reported to have cruised a good deal in Chinese waters, on the strength of which he gave us an exhibition of Chinese singing and dancing—a very odd performance that worked his uncle up into a frenzy of senile delight. After a glass or two of sweet champagne on the top of beer and Rhine wine, the old gentleman used invariably to do two things—first quote Goethe, and then, a little later on, begin pinching his wife. She would laugh, get very red, and say 'Aber Männchen! . . . benimm dich doch!' ('but . . . little husband! . . . behave thyself'); meanwhile the lodger sat unmoved, and Frau Merseburger's deprecating glances and giggles were addressed not to him but to me. It was a very harmless display, but next morning there would be a touch of apology in the old man's polite hopes that the feast had agreed with me (for this is the form such compliments take in Germany) and I imagined a Curtain Lecture had been administered. Such was the family on whom the comfort of my daily life depended, and who, I may add, took any amount of trouble to ensure it. Not only for this reason, but for others which can be imagined after reading the above, I never think of the Merseburgers without a little gush of friendliness and amusement.

From now onwards I became, and remained for seven years, a semi-detached member of the Herzogenberg family;

wherever they were bidden I was bidden too; not a day passed but that one or other of my meals was taken with them; and though like horses I have always preferred getting back for the night to my own stable, the little spare room, stocked for my needs, was always ready when required. And after I was in bed Lisl would come in, comb and brush in hand, her hair streaming over a white dressing-gown—' all in white and gold ' as I put it in my youthful enthusiasm—to make sure I had everything I needed. Daily I became more conscious of the fineness and strength of her personality—qualities which those who care to read such letters of hers as I give will, I think, feel, notwithstanding the inadequacies of translation.

But on one point I want to lay special stress, because in the years to come, when it militated so terribly against me, I tried to remember it had once been my chief delight; I mean a certain strong simplicity of soul that reminded me of the Elgin marbles, something at once womanly and incorruptible that suggested possible limitations but had a subtle majesty of which not even the greatest degree of intimacy dulled my perception. Witchery, an un-Greek element perhaps, was supposed to be her chief characteristic, and certainly her dear lovely person carried out that idea more than the other. Nevertheless had the Venus of Milo been a mortal, I think the large, quiet motions of her spirit would have been like Lisl's, except for two traits that may have been lacking in the goddess; a curious most touching humility, lurking, unnoticed by most people, at the bottom of her soul, and a lovingness that had the sweetness of ripe, perfect fruit, and which no one but her husband and I knew in its fullness. When I add that Herzogenberg was on far too big lines to begrudge her a semblance of what nature had withheld—or me the blessing of her tender mothering love—it will be allowed that the foundation of our friendship seemed well and truly laid.

In musical matters Lisl and I saw absolutely eye to eye, and it was a strange intoxicating thing to realise that in moments of musical ecstasy the heart of the being on

earth you loved best was so absolutely at one with yours that it might have been the same heart. I think I was always more critical than either of them as regards weak spots in Brahms, or even the older classics, and was never able, as they were, to admire every single page Bach ever wrote, including his 5 finger exercises. No doubt, too, the catholicity of taste I acquired in after life would have shocked them, but that day had not yet dawned. Meanwhile Lisl and I plodded away at our counterpoint in friendly rivalry, and used sometimes to wonder whether Brahms, given a 'cantus firmus' to work in four parts, would turn out anything so very much better than our productions. Herzogenberg was a splendid teacher, but though my industry and zeal left nothing to be desired, quite the reverse, he told me I wasn't really a good pupil—which I suppose any master would say of a beginner who always claims to know best!

I won't speak of a very thrilling unforgettable event, Frau Schumann's Jubilee, which took place that winter, nor of my riding adventures, including the most fantastic hunt I ever took part in, because these events are described elsewhere.[1] Of course I spent Christmas with the Herzogenbergs, and the table round my little tree was paved with miniature scores of Beethoven quartetts, from Op. 59 onwards. Brahms remarked that for the present 'the child' ought to confine herself to studying Op. 18—a symptom of paternal interest which almost melted Lisl to tears, but rather affronted 'the child.'

By and by, borne along by Papa Röntgen's teaching enthusiasm, and despite hands ill adapted to the instrument, I began learning the violin, and eventually became equal to taking second violin in easy quartetts. The lessons were arranged to include the excellent sit-down Röntgen tea—blessed cry of his Dutch blood—and after tea he taught me chess. I got so passionately attached to the game, though a very poor player, that eventually it had to be given up, otherwise I should have spent my life doing nothing else.

[1] Appendix III, ii. p. 37, Nos. 1 and 2; p. 39, No. 3.

CHAPTER XXIV

Brahms

Early in 1879, I think some time in January, Brahms came to Leipzig to conduct his Violin Concerto—played of course by Joachim, who had just been introducing it at Amsterdam, and was much upset at having to tune down his ears again to normal pitch, after having learned, as he said, to play it apparently in D♯ major in Holland—a hard feat! I understood then why pitch always has a tendency to rise, for, wedded as Joachim was to orthodoxy in all things, I nevertheless caught a few remarks about 'increased brilliancy,' and so on. That Concerto, which has never been among my favourite Brahms's works, may for aught I know be child's play to students nowadays; at that time however the technique was unfamiliar and not considered favourable to the instrument. Wags called it 'Concerto *against* (instead of *for*) the Violin.' But I fancy my musical sensibility was blurred in the wild excitement of at last getting to know the great man himself. During the following years I saw a good deal of him, on and off, and here follows the summing-up of my impressions for what they are worth.

Some people, I believe, have youthful enthusiasms, even in their own branch of art, that wane as years go on, but I can remember no musical recantations. A favourable judgment seems to me to imply a satisfied need; you may have many needs, but why should one interfere with the other? Why, when you come to know and admire, say, Anatole France, should you delight less

in someone at the opposite pole, for instance Dickens? From the very first I had worshipped Brahms's music, as I do some of it now; hence was predisposed to admire the man. But without exactly disliking him, his personality neither impressed nor attracted me, and I never could understand why the faithful had such an exalted opinion of his intellect. Rather taciturn and jerky as a rule, and notoriously difficult to carry on a conversation with, after meals his mind and tongue unstiffened; and then, under the stimulus of countless cups of very strong black coffee, he was ready to discuss literature, art, politics, morals, or anything under the sun. On such occasions, though he never said anything stupid, I cannot recall hearing him say anything very striking, and when his latest pronouncement on Bismarck, poetry, or even music was ecstatically handed round, it generally seemed to me what anyone might have said.

Once only do I remember his taking an exceptional line. A portrait of the old Kaiser by Lenbach, recently exhibited at the Museum, had aroused such a storm of indignation that it was withdrawn, and I believe ended by being ' verboten ' as far as public galleries were concerned. The reason was that whereas all other portraits of Wilhelm I. represented a martial-looking veteran of about sixty, of whom the Press stated that he swung himself on to his horse without the aid of a mounting block, Lenbach had painted a very tired old man of eighty-four, with pale, flabby cheeks, and sunken, lack-lustre eyes —in short the fine old wreck he was, of whom it was whispered that, as a matter of fact, he had to be lifted on to his horse in the recesses of the stable yard in order to make his daily appearance in the Thiergarten. This picture was infinitely pathetic and even beautiful; so, it seemed to me, was the idea of the old warrior determined to sally forth as long as he could sit on a horse's back, no matter how he got there. But the people who manufacture public opinion in Germany saw in this record of human decay something detrimental to monarchical prestige, some going so far as to declare the

picture should be publicly destroyed and the painter arraigned for *lèse-majesté*—in short the incident opened one's eyes to the gulf that lies between German and Anglo-Saxon mentality. There was a minority of another way of thinking, but these kept pretty quiet, and I was delighted to find that Brahms, who always had the courage of his opinions and truckled to no one, thought the whole outcry preposterous, and said so.

I think what chiefly angered me was his views on women, which after all were the views prevalent in Germany, only I had not realised the fact, having imagined 'mein Mann sagt' was a local peculiarity. Relics of this form of barbarism still linger in England, but as voiced by a people gone mad on logic, worshippers of brute force, and who visualise certain facts with the hard stare of eyes devoid of eyelashes, these theories would, I fancy, repel even our own reactionaries. George III., himself a German, might have subscribed 150 years ago to William II.'s famous axiom about women being out of place anywhere except in the kitchen, nursery, and church, but you often heard it quoted with complete assent by German women themselves in my day.

Brahms, as artist and bachelor, was free to adopt what may be called the poetical variant of the 'Kinder, Kirche, Küche' axiom, namely that women are play-things. He made one or two exceptions, as such men will, and chief among these was Lisl, to whom his attitude was perfect . . . reverential, admiring, and affectionate, without a tinge of amorousness. Being, like most artists, greedy, it specially melted him that she was such a splendid Hausfrau; indeed as often as not, from love of the best, she would do her own marketing. During Brahms's visits she was never happier than when concocting some exquisite dish to set before the king; like a glorified Frau Röntgen she would come in, flushed with stooping over the range, her golden hair wavier than ever from the heat, and cry: 'Begin that movement again; that much you owe me!' and Brahms's worship would flame up in unison with the blaze in the kitchen. In short he was adorable with Lisl.

In his relations with her husband, who completely effaced himself as musician in the master's presence, he took pains to be appreciative, but could not disguise the fact that Herzogenberg's compositions did not greatly interest him. Once when he had been in a bad temper and rather cruel about them, Lisl rated him and wept, and Brahms kissed her hand and nearly wept too, and it appears there was a most touching scene; but the thing rankled in her bosom for a long time.

To see him with Lili Wach, Frau Schumann and her daughters, or other links with his great predecessors was to see him at his best, so gentle and respectful was his bearing; in fact to Frau Schumann he behaved as might a particularly delightful old-world son. I remember a most funny conversation between them as to why the theme of his D major Piano Variations had what she called 'an unnecessary bar tacked on,' this being one of the supreme touches in that wonderful, soaring tune. She argued the point lovingly, but as ever with some heat, and I thought him divinely patient.

His ways with other women-folk—or to use the detestable word for ever on his lips 'Weibsbilder'—were less admirable. If they did not appeal to him he was incredibly awkward and ungracious; if they were pretty he had an unpleasant way of leaning back in his chair, pouting out his lips, stroking his moustache, and staring at them as a greedy boy stares at jam-tarts. People used to think this rather delightful, specially hailing it, too, as a sign that the great man was in high good-humour, but it angered me, as did also his jokes about women, and his everlasting gibes at any, excepting Lisl of course, who possessed brains or indeed ideas of any kind. I used to complain fiercely to her about this, but her secret feeling was, I expect, that of many Anti-Suffragist women I have known, who, for some reason or other on the pinnacle of man's favour themselves, had no objection to the rest of womenkind being held in contempt—the attitude of Fatima, the Pride of the Harem. To be fair to Lisl I never heard her express

definite sentiments on the subject, about which I had never thought myself, but as she was of her epoch and intensely German, her instinct was probably that of Fatima.

A delightful trait in Brahms was his horror of being lionised. He had a strong prejudice against England which he would jocularly insist on for my benefit, but what chiefly prevented his going there was dread of our hero-worshipping faculties: 'I know how you went on with Mendelssohn,' he said. What with their own embarrassment and his total lack of ease—or, as the Italians put it, lack of education—ordinary mortals who humbly tried to convey to him their admiration for his music had rather a bad time. The only person who sailed gaily through such troubled waters was Consul Limburger, but this again did not please Brahms and outraged the elect. After some performance, Limburger once remarked in his airy way: 'Really, Herr Doctor, I don't know where you mean to take us in the slow movement, whether to Heaven or Hell!' and Brahms replied with a mock bow: 'Whichever you please, Herr Consul,' which was quoted as a brilliant piece of repartee that ought to have crushed the audacious Limburger. But one retort of his was really rather good. The first subject in one of his Chamber works is almost identical with a theme of Mendelssohn's, and when some would-be connoisseur eagerly pointed out the fact, Brahms remarked: 'Ganz richtig—und jeder Schafskopf merkt's leider sofort!' ('Quite so—and the worst of it is every blockhead notices it directly.')

I am bound to say his taste in jokes sometimes left much to be desired, and can give an instance on the subject of my own name, which all foreigners find difficult, and which, as I innocently told him, my washerwoman pronounced 'Schmeiss.' Now the verb 'schmeissen,' to throw violently, is vulgar but quite harmless; there is however an antique noun, 'Schmeiss,' which means something unmentionable, and a certain horrible fly which frequents horrible places is called 'Schmeiss-Fliege.' As Brahms was for ever commenting on the extreme rapidity of my movements he

found the play upon words irresistible and nicknamed me ' die Schmeiss-Fliege,' but Lisl was so scandalised at this joke that he had to drop it.

Among his admirers it was the fashion to despise Wagner, but to this he demurred, and a remark he often made ' His imitators are monkeys (*Affen*) but the man himself has something to say ' was cited as proof of his noble, generous disposition. People like Joachim and Herzogenberg considered Wagner a colossal joke, and I remember their relating how as a sort of penance they sat through a whole act of ' Siegfried,' keeping up each other's spirits by exchanging a ' Good morning ' whenever a certain chord, let us say a diminished ninth, occurred in the score—a very provoking pleasantry even to hear about.

I like best to think of Brahms at the piano, playing his own compositions or Bach's mighty organ fugues, sometimes accompanying himself with a sort of muffled roar, as of Titans stirred to sympathy in the bowels of the earth. The veins in his forehead stood out, his wonderful bright blue eyes became veiled, and he seemed the incarnation of the restrained power in which his own work is forged. For his playing was never noisy, and when lifting a submerged theme out of a tangle of music he used jokingly to ask us to admire the gentle sonority of his ' tenor thumb.'

One of his finest characteristics was his attitude towards the great dead in his own art. He knew his own worth—what great creator does not?—but in his heart he was one of the most profoundly modest men I ever met, and to hear himself classed with such as Beethoven and Bach, to hear his C minor Symphony called ' The Tenth Symphony,'[1] jarred and outraged him. Once, when he turned up to rehearse some work of his, Reinecke had not yet finished rehearsing one of Mozart's symphonies—I forget which— and after the slow movement he murmured something to Lisl that I did not catch. She afterwards told me he had said: ' I'd give all my stuff (*Kram*) to have written that one Andante!'

[1] The implication was that it equalled, or surpassed, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.

Among desultory remarks of his which remained in my mind, I remember his saying that he had given up predicting what a young composer's development would be, having so often found that those he thought talented came to nothing and *vice versa*; and in this connection he pointed out that all the work of Glucks' that still lives was written after he was fifty. I have never looked up Gluck in a Lexicon to see if this opinion would still hold good.

To me personally he was very kind and fatherly in his awkward way, chiefly, no doubt, because of the place I held in his friend's heart; but after a very slight acquaintance I guessed he would never take a woman-writer seriously, and had no desire, though kindly urged by him to do so, to show him my work. At last one day, without asking my leave Lisl showed him a little fugue of mine, and when I came in and found them looking at it he began analysing it, simply, gravely, and appreciatively, saying this development was good, that modulation curious, and so on. Carried away by surprise and delight I lost my head, and pointing out a constructive detail that had greatly fussed Herzogenberg—the sort of thing that made him call me a bad pupil—asked eagerly: 'Don't you think if I feel it that way I have a right to end on the dominant?' Suddenly the scene changed, back came the ironic smile, and stroking his moustache he said in a voice charged with kindly contempt: 'I am quite sure, dear child, you may end when and where you please!' . . . There it was! he had suddenly remembered I was a girl, to take whom seriously was beneath a man's dignity, and the quality of the work, which had I been an obscure male he would have upheld against anyone, simply passed from his mind.

Now let us suppose a publisher had been present—and they swarmed at the Herzogenbergs—what would have been the effect of this little scene on a budding inclination to print for me later on? And does the public realise that unless it is published music cannot possibly get known?

. . . . . .

I have no intention of alluding to my own work in these memoirs, unless to make passing mention of such

early performances as happen to come within its scope; but there is one incident that happened some years later which, for women at least, has general application, and of which the fugue story reminds me. I once showed a big choral work to Levi, the great Wagner conductor—an open-minded man and one not afraid to look truth in the face. After hearing it he said: 'I could never have believed that a woman wrote that!' I replied, 'No, and what's more, in a week's time you won't believe it!' He looked at me a moment, and said slowly: 'I believe you are right!' Prejudice was bound to prevail over the evidence of his senses and intellect—in the end he would surely feel there must have been a mistake somewhere! . . . It is this back-wash that hampers women even more than material obstacles.

. . . . . .

One day I had a small triumph over Brahms. Among my exercises for Herzogenberg were two-part 'Inventions' in the Bach manner, and Lisl played him one of these as a new find unearthed by the Bach Society. In it was a certain harmonic turn not of Bach's time, but which he, who anticipated most things, might quite well have used, and Brahms's remark, which I must quote in the original, was 'Dem Kerl fällt doch immer wieder was Neues ein!' ('That fellow is always hitting on something new'). When the truth came out, the composer was warmly commended—and this time did not deserve it. It was just a bit of successful mimicry that any fairly clever musician might pull off.

But my greatest success with Brahms—who by the by held that everyone resembles some orchestral instrument and called me 'the Oboe'—had nothing to do with music. Piqued by his low estimate of my sex, I wrote a little sarcastic poem the last verse of which ran:

Der grosse Brahms hat's neulich ausgesprochen:
'*Ein g'scheidtes Weib, das hat doch keinen Sinn!*'
D'rum lasst uns emsig uns're Dummheit pflegen,
Denn nur auf diesen Punkt ist Werth zu legen
Als Weib und gute Brahmsianerin!

Translation

As the great Brahms recently proclaimed,
'A clever woman is a thing of naught!'
So let us diligently cultivate stupidity,
That being the only quality demanded
Of a female Brahms admirer!

That night he was at a supper given in his honour, and the mouth of everyone who approached him to talk about his music was stopped by his taking the poem out of his breast pocket and insisting on the unfortunate person reading it. This characteristic proceeding went on, I was told, throughout the evening and must have maddened the admirers.

In post-Leipzig days I saw little of him, but once when I was passing through Vienna and called on him, he was more than kind and cordial and begged me to fix up a meal at his house on my way back. Alas, when the time came he was away.

In jotting down these various impressions I am quite aware they do not do him justice. Even then I knew all about his wonderful generosity to poor musicians and old friends fallen on evil days. I noticed, too, that even the cynicism about women was belied by the extreme delicacy and tenderness of his work, and more especially by his choice of words to set to music. But all I can say is that this poetical insight did not determine his working theory (ascribed by some foolish persons to an early disappointment in love); and the point of memoirs—so it seems to me—is to relate what you saw yourself, not what other people, books, or subsequent reflections tell you. I saw integrity, sincerity, kindness of heart, generosity to opponents, and a certain nobility of soul that stamps all his music; but on the other hand I saw coarseness, uncivilised-ness, a defective perception of subtle shades in people and things, lack of humour, and of course the inevitable and righteous selfishness of people who have a message of their own to deliver and can't run errands for others. When Wagner

died he sent a wreath and was bitterly hurt at receiving no acknowledgement. A friend of the Wagners told me gloatingly that Cosima had said: 'Why should the wreath be acknowledged? *I understand the man was no friend to Our Art* '—and my informant added: 'It was a mistake to send it at all.' . . . Of such was the Kingdom of Wagner.

The accounts that reached the world of his cruel illness and death were infinitely tragic, for he fought against his doom, they say, and like a child when bedtime comes, wept and protested he did not want to go. The only consolation is to believe, as I for one do, that his best work was behind him, and that perhaps Nature did well to ring down the curtain.

CHAPTER XXV

Spring 1879

When Brahms came to Leipzig, as he did nearly every winter, many other composers—unenvious admirers of the greater master such as Dvorák, Kirchner, Grieg, etc.—used to turn up by magic to do him honour; and of course they all flocked to the Humboldstrasse. My first meeting with Grieg, whom I afterwards came to know so well, I remember chiefly because of a well-deserved smack in the face it brought me. Grieg, whose tastes were catholic, greatly admired the works of Liszt. Now it was the fashion in my world to despise Liszt as composer. But what had to be borne as coming from mature musicians may well have been intolerable in a student, and some remark of mine causing Grieg's fury to boil over, he suddenly enquired what the devil a two-penny halfpenny whipper-snapper like me meant by talking thus of my betters? Next day at cockcrow the dear man came stumping up my stairs to apologise, and this incident laid the foundation of a very warm feeling between me and the Griegs which came to fruition later on.

During that winter my friendship with the Wachs grew and consolidated and what is more, resulted in close relations between them and the Herzogenbergs. They had lived in the same town for two or three years, and I really believe would never have got beyond mere acquaintanceship but for some chance connecting link such as myself. As regards aloofness Lisl found her match in Lili (whom I shall allude to in these Memoirs as ' Lili Wach,' to avoid

confusion with 'Lisl'); but once the ice was broken, the two women became intimate friends, and I often think the one thing Lisl stood slightly in awe of was the fastidious judgment and penetrating instinct of Lili Wach. Both the Herzogenbergs, who, like myself were freethinkers, delighted in Wach, except at funerals and other functions involving religion, but they tolerated and even admired the simple piety of their old friend Frau von B.—mother of the Seven Ravens—in whom it was a fundamental, and not, as you sometimes felt with Wach, an excrescence.

By this time Leipzig balls no longer tempted me, but there were other opportunities for the display of finery, such as big routs at Frau Livia's or the Limburgers' in honour of passing celebrities. On these occasions Lisl took great interest in my personal appearance; like my mother she would waylay me in corners and passages with pins and hairpins that saved the situation, and alas! what had irritated me in the one case touched and delighted me in the other! My musical education was possibly being narrowed in that severely classical atmosphere, but I suppose every scheme of education is either too narrow or too diffuse. Certainly the impulse towards Opera, of which I had been conscious in the days of Mr. Ewing, was checked for the moment. Though exception was made of course in favour of Mozart and 'Fidelio,' my group considered opera a negligible form of art, probably because Brahms had wisely avoided a field in which he would not have shone, and of which the enemy, Wagner, was in possession. Besides this, the Golden Age of Leipzig had been orchestral and oratorial, and both musicians and concert public were suspicious of music-drama. The old families, who had been rooted in their Gewandhaus seats from time immemorial, seldom hired boxes at the Opera—partly, perhaps, because under the system of abonnement it was played alternately with drama; anyhow it was not the fashion among our Leipzig grandees. I used to go and hear 'Carmen,' still my favourite opera, whenever I had a chance, and was indignant at Herzogenberg's patro-

nising remark that Bizet was no doubt ' ein Geniechen ' (a *little* genius). But in that school Bizet, Chopin, and all the great who talk tragedy with a smile on their lips, who dart into the depths and come up again instantly like divers, who, in fact, decline to wallow in the Immensities —all these were habitually spoken of as small people. How I thought of this madness the other day when someone repeated to me a remark Forain had just made at luncheon: ' l'art se tient dans le creux de la main!' It appeared they had been discussing Wagner, who evidently was not of Forain's way of thinking, having written operas the length of which always seemed to me artistically arrogant—a wilful ignoring of the limits set by nature to human receptivity. But Wagner is, among other things, the greatest hypnotiser the world has ever seen, and for the hypnotised time does not exist.

Another curious thing about the Brahms group was that orchestration apparently failed to interest them, consequently it played no part in my instruction. No one holds more strongly than the writer that content comes first; before you speak it is well to have something definite to say. But in that circle, what you may call the *external*, the merely pleasing element in music, was so little insisted on, that its motto really might have been the famous ' take care of the sense and the sounds will take care of themselves '—hardly an adequate outfit for a musician even if the sounds did take care of themselves, which they do not. Once some Orchestral Variations of Herzogenberg's were performed which I scarcely recognised for the same I had admired as one of the inevitable piano duets, so bad was the instrumentation.

. . . . . .

But whatever the defects of my environment may have been, in it I learned the necessity, and acquired the love, of hard work, as well as becoming imbued with a deep passion for Bach, which I think is in itself an education. As I indicated elsewhere, Herzogenberg and his Berlin colla-

borators were constantly discovering and editing new wonders, and though the Leipzig branch of the Bach Verein was not a very grand affair the arrangement and production of these 300-year-old novelties was enthralling to him and us. In the early autumn and late spring it was our custom to give concerts in small neighbouring townlands, starting early in various reserved third-class compartments, dining at an inn, and contriving to walk back part of the way towards evening through the woods. Owing to the benighted pitch of the organs in some of these remote country churches there was not infrequently trouble with the wind instruments, and on one occasion, a certain organ being in particularly bad repute, the Herzogenbergs and I paid it a preliminary visit armed with a horn. He understood the valves but could not produce a sound; I, on the contrary, to whom the valves were and are a mystery could at least blow a hunting horn. Meanwhile Lisl, physically a model St. Cecilia but knowing less than nothing about that saint's instrument, sat at the keyboard holding a piercing and uncontrollable 'a,' and thus between us we found out what the possibilities were of a friendly relation between horn and organ. The sacristan was scandalised, for though we were in church of course we nearly died of laughing.

On these concert expeditions Lisl devoted herself assiduously, as was only politic, for our funds were never brilliant, to adoring members and their rich friends. All day excursions with almost any group of people are a trial, but one moment was always exquisite. We used to take part-songs with us, and after drinking coffee in some woodland restaurant a more romantic spot in the forest was selected, the tuning fork banged on a stone, and in that divinest of concert rooms we made divine music. To be in the Bach Verein at all proved you were a serious, indeed often an over-serious and exceedingly narrow-minded musician, and if some of our members were not in their first youth, zeal atoned for worn out vocal chords. And the crown of all was that the whole thing came to about 1s, 6d. per head.

By the time Good Friday came round again Papa Röntgen considered me fit to take my place among the second violins in the annual Passion performance—no great compliment as will presently be seen—imploring me passionately to keep my eye on the leader and not cut in at wrong moments in my excitement. These performances—held in the very Thomas Kirche for which the work was originally written, and of which Mendelssohn, who rediscovered the Passion, had made a great tradition—are among the most unforgettable experiences of my life. The proceeds were devoted to the Widows and Orphans Fund of the Gewandhaus Orchestra, but according to a curious by-law, only those who had taken an active part in the performance had a claim on that year's balance. Now many modern instruments have no place in the orchestra of Bach's time; consequently trombones, bass clarinets, and other outsiders vamped up in spare hours enough violin to scrape their way through Bach's very easy string parts, sitting generally in the ranks of the second violins. And so vilely did they play that I quite understood why I had been allowed to join them. This was the only time I ever performed in an orchestra, and, as may be imagined under the circumstances, I was astonished at the hideous noises produced round about me—and still more astonished the following year, when I sat below, to notice how little it matters in a big choral work what goes on at some of the second desks!

I count it as one of the great privileges vouchsafed me that I learned to love the Passion in that place of places, the prestige and acoustic properties of which make up for the dreariness of its architecture. In one of the side galleries, close up to the orchestra, which was grouped aloft in front of the organ, sat the Thomaner Schoolboys, representatives of the very choir of which Bach was Cantor. I suppose realising these things has something to do with it, but never, so it seems to me, is the Chorale in the opening chorus so overwhelming as when trumpeted forth with the pride of lawful heirs by the Thomaner Chor.

I despair of giving an idea of the devoutness of the audience. Generally speaking, most of the inhabitants of Leipzig, including nearly everyone I knew, were either exceedingly conventional churchgoers or unbelievers, but on this occasion the dull mist of religious indifference appeared to lift for the time being. It was not only that the church seemed flooded with the living presence of Bach, but you felt as if the Passion itself, in that heartrending, consoling portrayal, was being lived through as at no other moment of their lives by every soul in the vast congregation. This is the divine part of listening to such music in company with people who have known and loved every note of it ever since they were born, whose natural language it is. I suppose every artist can say of one or two hours in the past that in these he touched the extreme height and depth of his emotional life; such hours were mine during a certain Passion performance in the Thomas Kirche, in a time of great trouble, a few years later.

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The Good Friday solemnity is the supreme flower and conclusion of the Leipzig musical season, and shortly afterwards Lisl's father and mother appeared on the scene, but at different moments, for they did not get on and seldom met. I had been requested when in England to send some fairy-book 'for my mother, who is herself a regular old fairy-tale.' When I saw Baroness von Stockhausen, *née* Gräfin Baudissin, I said to myself: 'The Wicked Godmother!' and looking the other day at a superb bust of her by Hildebrand, belonging to one of her grandchildren, there is no denying that this portait of the Evil Genius of my life bears out that idea.

She was German by marriage only, the Baudissins being of Danish extraction, and Lisl was proud of including among her ancestors a certain learned Count Baudissin who collaborated with Tieck and Schlegel in the superb German version of Shakespeare, but was too modest to

allow his name to appear on the title page. There was also a Russian ancestress—held responsible by Lisl for some of her mother's more difficult moods. But those of us who know our Selma Lagerlöf are content to give Scandinavia sole credit for a personality that would have put ' Gösta Berlin,' ' the Commandante,' and all those elemental primitives into the shade.

Of a magnificent presence, gifted, witty, and violent as ten devils rolled into one, I found this old woman, who looked like a Louis XV. Marquise, very attractive, and hoped she would like me; but unfortunately I was hated at first sight with the vitriolic jealousy of one who had never permitted her children to have friends, or even playmates. Herzogenberg, who was rather fond of his mother-in-law, once said that but for his Jesuit training he could never have achieved the winning of his bride, and I noticed that this jocular reference to that agitating time rather distressed Lisl. Most of her girlhood had been passed in Austria, where the aristocratic family tradition includes a very strict reading of the Fifth Commandment; and it may be imagined how this state of things would commend itself to a mother of Frau von Stockhausen's temperament.

The father was an icy-cold Hanoverian nobleman for whom the world had ceased revolving round the sun on the day when the Court of Hanover, to which he had been Minister, was liquidated. After a first brief meeting with these two august personages I was implored to shun the house during the remainder of their respective visits. Lisl was deeply pained and humiliated by her mother's outrageous unfriendliness towards one in whom she had professed the most charming interest, but there was nothing to be done. As well reason with Vesuvius. Then, for the first time, I noticed my friend's abject terror of conflicts . . . and also her inability to cope with them.

CHAPTER XXVI

Summer 1879 to Summer 1880

I was about to say most truthfully that I remember absolutely nothing about the holidays of 1879, when turning to Lisl's letters I find to my astonishment that for a brief moment marriage had been spoken of! Perhaps it was in connection with the one and only chance I had, or thought I had, of making a 'brilliant' marriage—a transitory afterglow of the 'Social Ambition phase'—which promised both leisure for work and more money. As I have forgotten no real inner experience however mad and foolish, and had utterly forgotten this, the matrimonial mood must have been quite evanescent, but Lisl's letters,[1] which exhibit her pure, lofty view of life in its perfection, followed each other in swift agony. It was one of those storms in a teacup which sprang up again and again in the course of our friendship; she never grasped how strongly, yet how lightly, passing moods affect people of the impressionable type, and each time was overwhelmed afresh with apprehension.

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During the following autumn in Leipzig I heard Pan-Germanism talked for the first time. It was at a dinner-party, and the exponent was Dr. Simson, a wise, polished old Jew, President of the Imperial Court of Justice, which as a sop to Saxony sits at Leipzig. Wach, who was my neighbour, and suspected of aiming at the Presidency of the Reichs-Gericht himself, whispered in my ear that the

[1] Appendix III., ii. p. 27, No. 12; p. 29, No. 13.

whole thing was a wild-goose scheme. Presently the handsome, grey-haired old President, bending across the table in the most courtly way, trusted that the charming young foreign lady whose presence was such a delight to everyone, etc., etc., would not resent what he was about to say, namely that England was now on the down-grade. So it had been successively with Spain, Holland, and France, the world progressing on the wheel system. And the country now swinging to the top, and about to relieve us of the sceptre, was . . . 'our beloved Fatherland.' That conversation remained in my memory chiefly because of the speaker's tactful gilding of this pill, his discourse being shot through with complimentary references to the great part borne by us in civilisation. As for his thesis that England was played out, it seemed too ridiculous to get angry about.

I cannot remember whether the new doctrine was ventilated conversationally or in a speech; where professors are present the two things are much the same, and the occasion being rather a grand one there were many speeches that day. I was by no means insular, I think; a great many German institutions that would not appeal to the Anglo-Saxon temperament, such as the periodical excursions into the country of musical and other guilds, the Sunday trooping forth of whole families into the woods, and even the 'Stammtisch'—a table at restaurants reserved night after night for the same group of bores—I found, and still find charming. But a practice no amount of familiarity ever reconciled me to was speechifying.

The Germans say of themselves that wherever three of their nation are gathered together—say at the North Pole—they instantly found a 'Society'; if so I believe it is chiefly in order to have an excuse for making speeches. You never were safe from them. Even at gatherings of old friends and relations your heart would leap into your mouth as the familiar slow tap-tap on a wineglass, followed by the sacramental words 'Verehrte Anwesende!' (Honoured ones here present!) while an expression of satisfaction, such

as must steal over the faces of watchers on the Rigi when the sun rises, transfigured all countenances—including those of would-be modern people who pretended to dislike speechifying.

I once saw a terrible thing happen at a birthday feast given by Frau von B——. The parquet floor was very slippery, the chairs—of the high-backed top-heavy antique kind—had arms, and the guests were so numerous that these arms were touching each other. A pale, melancholy man with dank black hair who sat next the hostess rose with some difficulty, as a sardine might rise out of a freshly opened box, and made one of those speeches which cause honoured ones there present to stare at their plates and roll bread-pellets, the theme being the merits of the deceased master of the house. It was well meant and no doubt sincere, but more than usually platitudinal, involved, and sham-pathetic. When at last, after an over-intimate peroration, the speaker sat down suddenly as if overcome by emotion, the chair slid away from behind him and he absolutely disappeared from view, to be grasped under the armpits and hoisted up, swathed in folds of embroidered table-cloth, by the horror-stricken ladies to right and left of him. No one smiled; the tone of the speech made it impossible to pass the thing off as a joke, to express regret, or do anything but pretend no one had noticed the incident. And this feat we all accomplished.

On the other hand the Fairs, of which I had spoken disparagingly in an early letter home, ended by completely captivating my fancy. The great Autumn Fair, with its ramshackle booths and strangely costumed traders from all parts of the world, including Polish Jews of a concentrated essence of Israel seldom seen in England, was really picturesque; and what redeemed it from the vulgarity of the same thing at International Exhibitions was the knowledge that everyone was there on business only. We particularly loved the crockery market, which was held on the picturesque side of the town; all the wares were strewn pell-mell on the ground, and alas! uncouth, savagely coloured

descendants of antique pottery of beautiful designs were already being crowded out by the forerunners of l'Art Nouveau; when you chose one of them the saleswoman thought you must be mad. But I think I loved the Christmas Fair best, for then Birnam Wood came to Dunsinane, the large open space between the Museum and the New Theatre being turned into a forest of snow-covered little firs. Whole families went forth to choose the Christmas-tree, each child shriekingly recommending a different one till ' mein Mann ' finally clinched the matter.

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The Christmas of 1879 I spent in Berlin. There had been much lamentation on my part because the Herzogenbergs were suddenly summoned to spend the Festival with her mother at the Austrian aunt's Schloss, but shortly before their departure I made the acquaintance of a couple, the Conrad Fiedlers, who were destined to play a great part in my life. He was the younger son of a grand old Leipzigerin who lived with her eldest son's family in the town house in winter, and at her beautiful country place a few miles off in the summer. All the Fiedlers were very rich, and why the Conrads had settled in Berlin I never could make out, for they both detested it and were on the point of migrating to her native town, Munich.

Conrad was of a type you seldom meet in Germany, a fairly well known writer on philosophical subjects, an acknowledged authority on painting and sculpture, a generous patron of struggling talent, and yet . . . O wonder! attached to no Institution . . . merely a gentleman at large. More than usually encased in a certain Saxon frigidity that contrasts strangely with the geniality of the other brand of Saxon, I noticed that everyone secretly coveted his esteem and that his word always carried weight. His wife was one of those people whom all portrait painters pursue, more especially if the husband is a wealthy art patron. At that time she was quite young, tall and striking looking, with daring, gloriously blue eyes, yellow-gold hair, and incomparable colouring. Unlike most of the

friends mentioned in these pages she is still alive, therefore I will merely say that we were very fond of each other for years, although later on, after her first husband's death, when she and Frau Wagner became great friends, we gradually drifted apart. A gulf was bound to open up sooner or later between intimates of Wahnfried and people refractory to the Wagner cultus. Meanwhile, whether at Munich, at Crostewitz (his mother's country house, where an ideal summer retreat had been contrived for them at one end of the homely farm quadrangle attached to the Schloss) or at their Florentine Villino, their kindness to me was inexhaustible.

I first met these new friends, as I said, before what promised to be a desolate Christmas bereft of Lisl, and with the warm impulsiveness which was her chief charm, Mary Fiedler bore me off to Berlin then and there.

Curiously enough I cannot remember anything about my first impressions of the town itself but plenty about the people I met there. Of the Joachims I saw a good deal. She was the finest contralto I ever heard, and until she got too fat, the Orpheus of one's dreams. Joachim according to all English people was of course perfection, but I saw him in another setting and never wholly liked him—perhaps among other reasons because trouble was even then brewing in his house and all my sympathies were with the wife, who, though socially far less satisfactory than her husband, was a warm, living, human being. I wished she would not crawl under the supper table in a fit of New Year jollity, armed with a hat pin, but why did Joachim allow it, I asked myself? Why did he sit serenely at the head of the table looking like a planed-down Jupiter and utter no remonstrance? In a certain letter[1] Rubinstein's answer to this riddle may be found, and though obviously grotesque, it proves that I was not the only Joachim-heretic in the world. That evening he told me

[1] Appendix IV., ii. p. 117.

he had just heard Melba, and raved about her; 'How can one speak of coldness,' he asked, 'in connection with such phrasing?' Perhaps he knew that the same accusation was often levelled against himself, and in both cases it is obvious what people meant—the 'coldness,' compared to Renaissance work, of the Delphic Charioteer, which is not to everyone's taste.

Early in these Memoirs I told how a fully fledged but not very bright cousin of mine expected to see smoke coming up through the water when trains passed under the Basingstoke Canal—an anecdote some people believe with difficulty. I can relate a fact, also on oath, about that exceptionally intelligent and cultivated man, Joachim, which I find still more incredible, namely that in the year 1880 or thereabouts he had no notion that the figures on the metronome refer to the number of beats per minute. Herzogenberg, speechless with amazement, seized him by the lapel of his coat: 'But what then, dear friend,' he asked, 'do you represent to yourself when you set it?' 'Nothing!' answered Joachim, 'I note the tempo but have never troubled my head about the basis of the matter . . . I supposed it was . . . well, just like that!' Whereupon Lisl remarked, 'Thank God! now I hope Heinrich will cease talking about women's unarithmetical brains.'

It was in Berlin at Christmas that I first met Rubinstein, and in unexpected mood too. A totally talentless maiden, relying I suppose on her great beauty—for his weaknesses were notorious—had insisted on playing to him with a view to being advised as to whether she should make music her career. When she had done he remarked quite simply: 'How should *you* ever become an artist?' and then, taking up her hand, he pointed in succession to her fingers, her forehead, and her heart, slowly saying 'hier nix, hier nix, und *hier* nix!'—a terrible sequence of nothingness that needs no translation. There was one thing only that roused the mild-mannered Conrad Fiedler to frenzy—half talents, and when I reported this incident he was delighted.

I also saw a good deal of two paladins of Brahms, Philip Spitta, the chief excavator and editor of lost Bach treasures, and Chrysander, the biographer of Händel, who told me there were masses of yet undeciphered Early English music in the British Museum compared to which the work of Palestrina and Co. was the groping of children, or words to that effect. After Brahms's death two letters of mine were returned to me (one being written at Sir George Grove's request to beg the loan of the 'Tragic Overture' for the Crystal Palace Concerts) and I find I well rubbed in the learned Chrysander's tribute to despised England. When next we met Brahms asked me to play him some Scotch music, and after listening to one of those archaic reels the first phrase of which is, for instance, in D major and the second in C major, the remark was: 'And this people claims to be musical'! . . .

Fiedler's collection was very fine, and ranged from a superb Holbein to the early works of the great German sculptor Hildebrand, whose first patron he was and whom he completely relieved from the necessity of prostituting his genius. There were also plenty of modern German pictures (including about ten portraits of Mary)—Feuerbach and Böcklin, who by the by was Swiss, being the only names I can recall; but in the Museum, introducing me to Manet and the French School, he once remarked: 'Of course one must encourage native talent but oh! for something on this level!' Feuerbach I thought the bore of bores and loathed Stuck, but Manet seemed impossible to take seriously. I marvelled at Conrad's enthusiasm though certain he was right, for one felt he knew. He introduced me to his great friend Bode, Director, or perhaps then he was only Sub-Director, of the Museum. I never was sorrier for anyone than for that man when I next saw him, in 1901. Under a monarch who did not paint himself, he had got together a wonderful collection of modern pictures, the apple of his eye. But now he was in deep disgrace; the pictures were stowed away under the roof, where it was hoped no one would clamber up to see them, and there had

been a moment, fortunately staved off, when a particularly fine Zuloaga seemed likely to leave Berlin for ever by command of the All Highest. Altogether that short stay in Berlin was most kindling, and was to lead to further developments before long.

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Meanwhile I was being a subject of strife in a distant ancestral home. Lisl wrote of 'my poor mother's King Lear-like feelings,' and when we met in Leipzig I gathered that the family meeting had not been an unqualified success.

That winter two English friends turned up, St. John Brodrick and another man I will not name, merely saying that he afterwards became Headmaster of one of our great public schools and was considered in England to be very musical, mainly because he sang German songs in German. I introduced him of course to my friends, but what I did not bargain for was his proposing to perform himself and asking Lisl to accompany his wooden, business-like rendering of a particularly romantic song of Brahms, the refrain of which gave full scope for our very peculiar English 'r.' The effect was indescribably comic. I, naturally, was covered with shame; as for Lisl, she literally laid her head on the music to conceal her laughter, while the singer plodded on sturdily, far too pleased with himself to notice anything. But whereas she was only amused at this exhibition and forthwith added an incomparable bit of mimicry to her repertory, Herzogenberg was irritated at the bottomless cheek of this countryman of mine, especially after he had upset the cream-jug over Lisl's black velvet gown, merely remarking: 'that comes of gesticulating.'

In April the Herzogenbergs went to Italy, and my longing, inflamed by contact with the Fiedlers, to go there myself was such, that I begged her, as in the case of hunting in the home correspondence, never to mention the word 'Italy' in her letters—a piece of unreasonableness and intense selfishness that serene well-balanced person could not understand but reproachfully gave in to. On my mother's

birthday, June 2, there was a performance at the Wach's by Röntgen and his team of a string quartett of mine, a mere piece of student's work of course. I have said hard things about German speechifying, but on this occasion Wach made a most beautiful little speech about my mother, and about absent friends who did their best to replace her as regards one of her children. By that time Lisl's raillery had almost cured my childish habit of tears, but it was difficult to keep them back then. There were two great bonds between me and Lili Wach, who was very religious —my thorough knowledge of the Bible, and my devotion to my mother—and I noticed this speech of her husband's moved her as much as it did me. Afterwards I got up and silently kissed him; the action wasn't ridiculous and seemed so to no one. I don't think anything ever gave my mother greater pleasure than hearing about that evening.

Part of the early summer of 1880 I spent at Crostewitz, and was thrilled to see the small round cannon balls of 1813 still sticking in the walls of the house. Madame Fiedler, as everyone called Conrad's mother (a nomenclature dating from the cannon-ball era and which seemed only to have survived in her case) kept open house, and on Saturdays and Sundays the lake and skittle-ground swarmed with the ' nice ' people of the neighbourhood, reinforced by stiffly buttoned-up, heel-clicking officers from the garrison. Later on a gorgeous supper was served in a big verandah fronting the wood-girt lake, followed by cards for the seniors, and society games, boating, and flirtation for the juniors. Madame Fiedler was passionately fond of whist, and one evening I heard her remark to a profusely decorated General and Excellenz who had just lost her the game, that she feared the young ones were better at love-making than their elders at cards. This characteristic little dig, delivered with a pensive, kindly smile, went home, the Excellenz's spendthrift son, a Lieutenant in the Guards, being at that moment engaged in exploring the woods with a penniless beauty. Mary, who detested these gatherings, would

generally plead ill-health and retire to her vast bed, where she partook of a delicate supper and half a bottle of champagne. Country joys did not appeal to her, and most of her time at Crostewitz was spent in that bed.

Madame Fiedler's eldest son, Philipp, goodnaturedly gave me the run of his stable, and the two astonished carriage horses were driven tandem about the tortuous, rut-riven lanes. One of them, a grey whose hind-quarters I thought looked like jumping, was even urged over the fences on the steeple-chase course. Once we came a terrific crash which slightly crippled both me and my mount for a time and nearly killed Madame Fiedler, who though the most masterful of old châtelaines was exceedingly nervous about animals. Dreamy Doctor Philipp—of course like all cultivated Germans he had taken his degree in philosophy—was a poet of real talent gone to seed (for unfortunately he versified as some people chatter, without reflection or self-control), and the result of this adventure was a fantastic poetical drama in which all the personages of our little world were introduced with pseudonyms of the ' Pilgrim's Progress ' kind. For instance Mary was ' Lockenlicht ' (Shining-locks), Herzogenberg ' Canonicus Fugenfürst ' (Canon Fugue-prince), Lisl ' Etherzart ' (Delicate-as-Ether), the author himself, who had been much blamed by his wife and mother for lending me the horse, ' Doctor Unbedacht ' (Doctor Thoughtless), and so on.

This kindly man had one little weakness, a tendency to exaggerated thrift, and if everyone had not already known that Madame Fiedler's open-handed hospitality caused her heir some heartburnings they would have guessed it from his naive choice of a pseudonym for her—' Frau Spendegern ' (Mrs. Glad-to-Spend). In conclusion the play was called ' Miss Hopp-in-die-Welt '—here no translation is required—and was supposed to be very complimentary to the heroine, but to see ourselves as others see us is seldom all satisfaction. I mention this amazing production, in which there are some very pretty verses, because the whole incident was so typical.

That spring there was a good deal of tennis at Dölitz, the Limburgers' country house (though the real Dölitz period came later) and there was also a plan of my going to Ober Ammergau with Johanna Röntgen; but the absurd thing is that I cannot remember whether it came off or whether I only assisted at the performance in the illustrated papers—pests that take the edge off everything but acutest first-hand impressions. Anyhow I know that I eventually joined my mother at Homburg, she having been convoyed thither, very ill, by one of my married sisters, and remember her maid remarking scornfully as she struggled with the usual chest of drawers fitted with one key only: 'I suppose the Germans don't know what knobs is.' After that we went on to Ragatz, where alas! as at Homburg, I jeered at mother's enthusiasm for the Kurhaus bands. On the way home we spent a couple of days in Paris; although she was hardly able to stand a few new bonnets were picked up, and on this journey, as ever when she was really ill, her pluck and cheerfulness filled me with admiration. And so to England, where the financial situation was much discussed and nothing radical done to meet it.

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